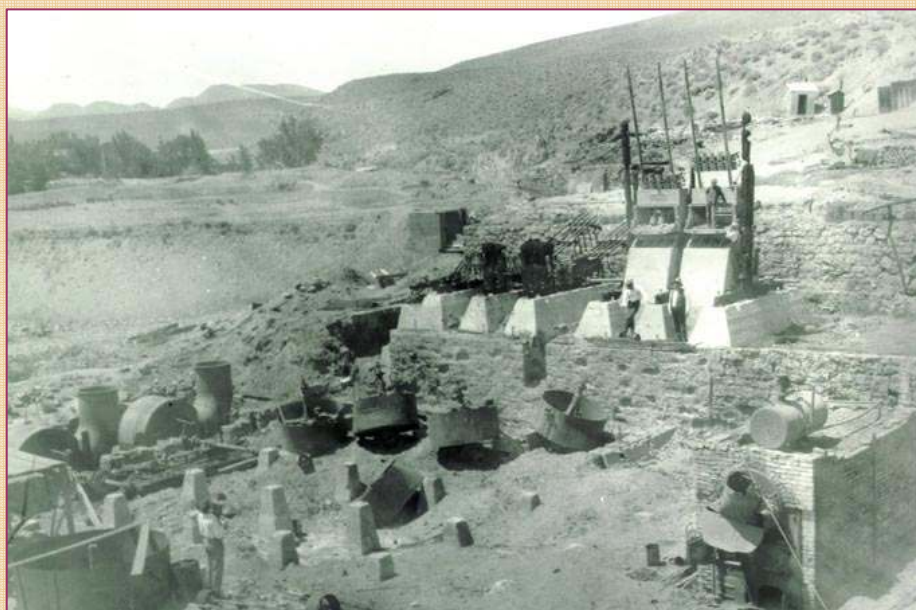


DAYTON STATE PARK

DAYTON STATE PARK 2007 MASTER PLAN



NEVADA DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF PLAN

1. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to update the 1990 Master plan for Dayton State Park. The current Master Plan for Dayton State Park was written in 1990. The plan, which is over 15 years old, no longer addresses the needs and circumstances of the surrounding region.

The plan begins with an introduction to the document and then covers the description, location and park setting along with the park's history in chapter 1; regional influences which directly and indirectly affect the park in chapter 2; the park's natural and cultural resources, including existing facilities and description of uses in chapter 3; the resulting master development plan in Chapter 4. The four plan development stages are: data inventory and analysis, public participation, alternative generation, and recommended plan development.

2. Planning Process

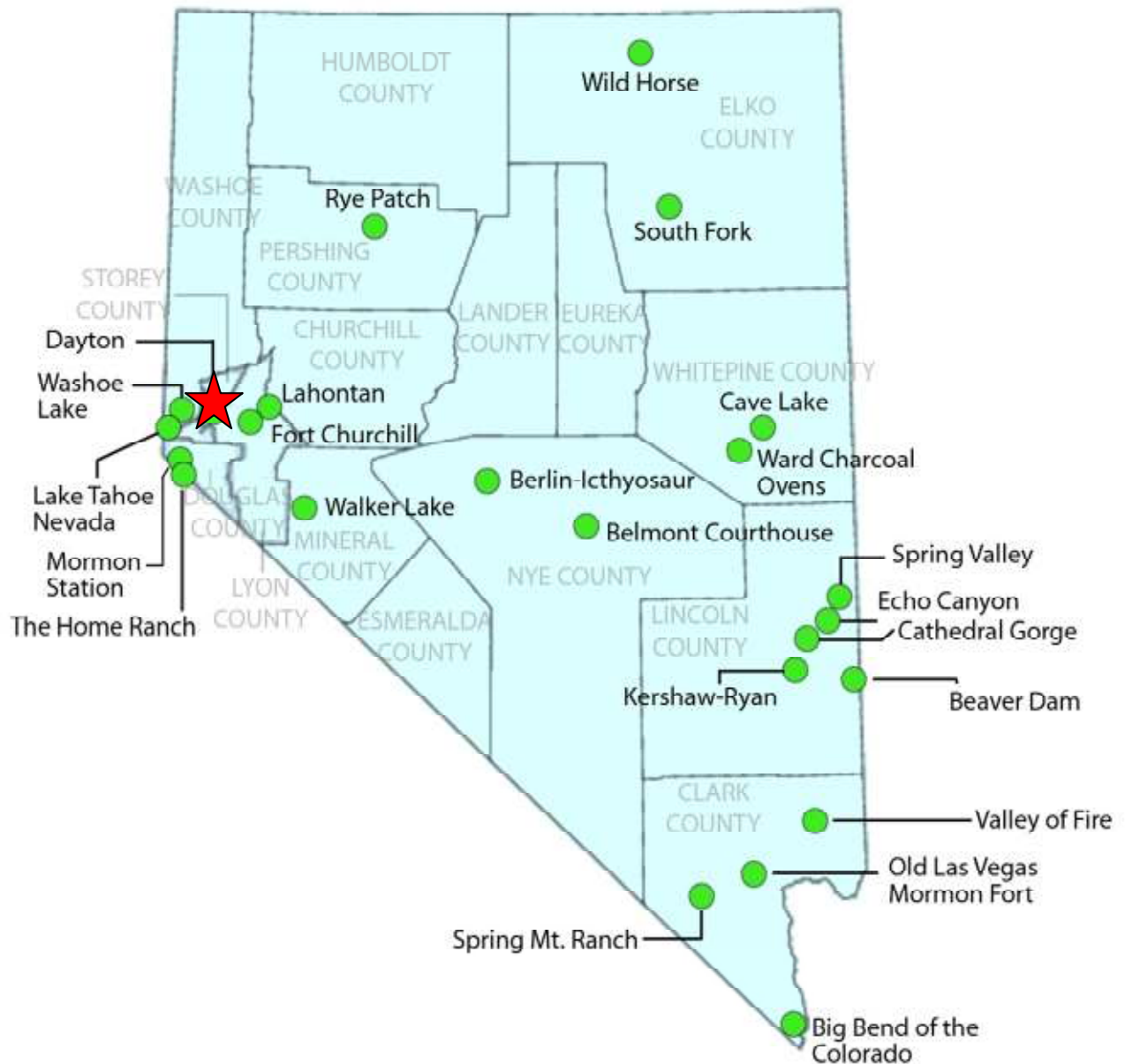
The current park master plan for Dayton State Park was completed in 1987 and revised in 1990. The planning process to update this plan involved over one years work in 2006 and 2007, by state parks' staff, partnering agencies, and the public. The details of the process can be found in Chapter 4.

B. CURRENT PARK SETTING

The Division of State Parks is one of eight agencies within the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. The Division has the legislated intent to: "acquire, protect, develop and interpret a well balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreational, scientific and historical importance for the inspiration, use and enjoyment of the People of the State of Nevada and that such areas shall be held in trust as irreplaceable portions of Nevada's natural and historic heritage" (NRS 407.013).

NEVADA DIVISION OF STATE PARKS

Figure 1.1, Nevada State Park System, Park Location



Dayton State Park is located along U.S. Highway 50; 12 miles east of Carson City on what used to be the north edge of Dayton, Nevada. The edge of the Town of Dayton has extended significantly to the north and east. The Park's 152 acres covers the SE ¼ of Section 14, T16N, R21E along the base of Flowery Ridge. Elevations range from 4323 feet at the Carson River to 4547 feet on the higher areas above the Rock Point Mill Site.

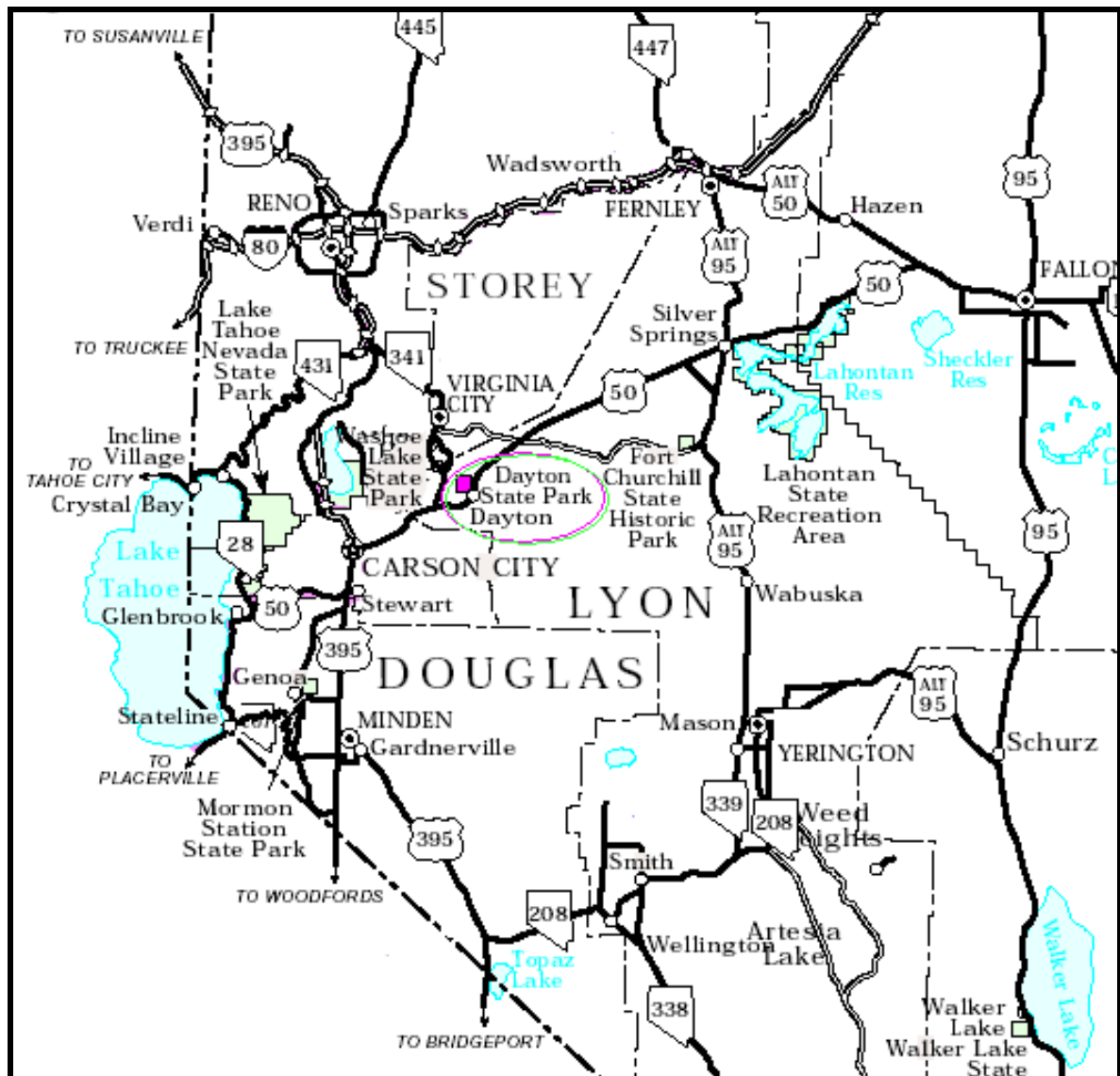


Figure 1.2, General Vicinity, Park Location

1. Physical Setting of the Area

Dayton State Park is located on the western edge of Dayton Valley. The Virginia Range on the northwest and the Pinenut Mountains to the southeast form the Valley's boundaries.

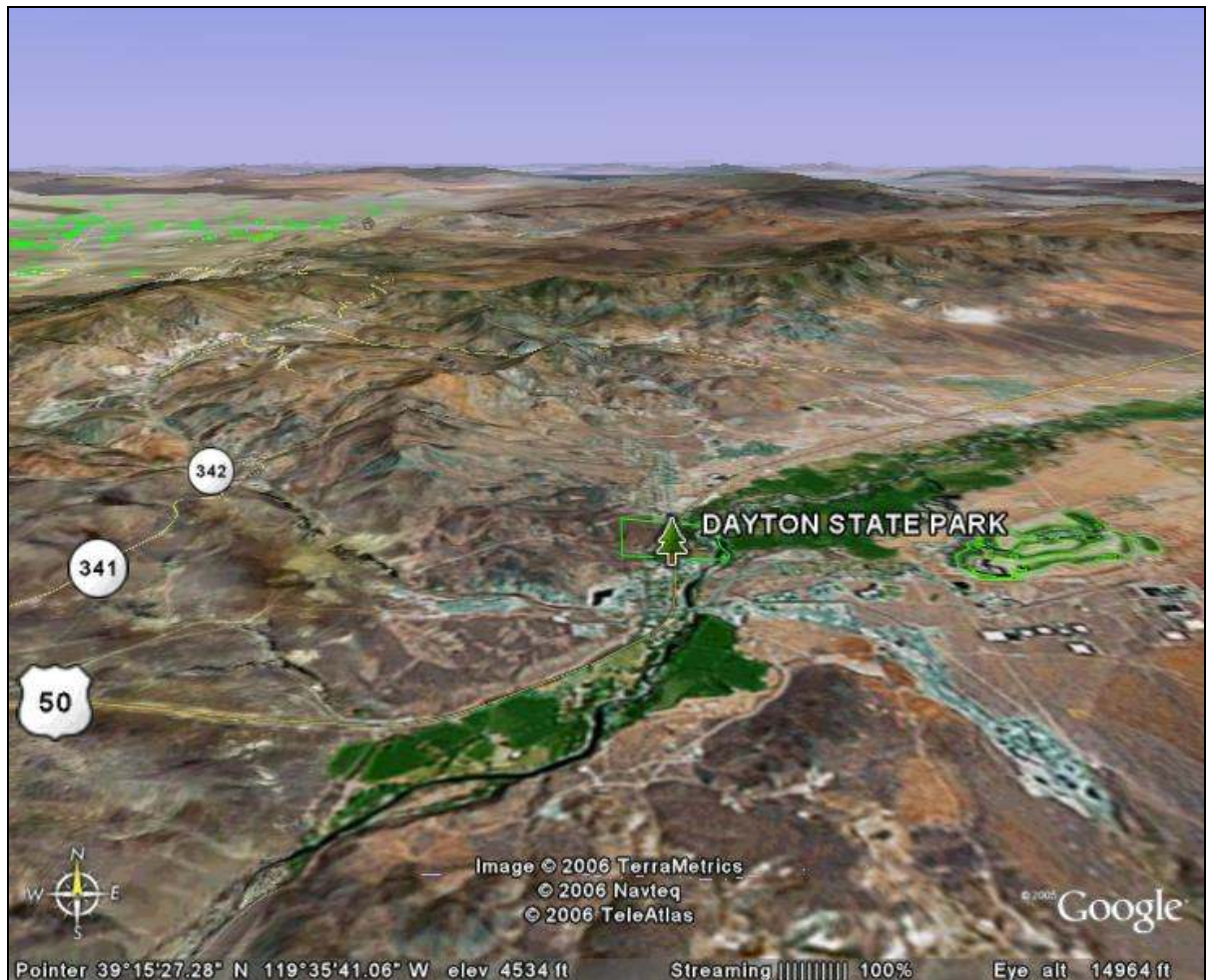


Figure 1.3, Landscape View, Park Location

The valley, at the time of the 1987 plan, supported extensive agriculture. Today, the agricultural lands are being replaced by urban development which is surrounding the Park in Dayton Valley and those valleys to the east at an alarming rate.

U.S. Highway 50 bisects Dayton State Park, running north and south along the base of Flowery Ridge. The location of the highway, combined with the dramatic landscape difference of Flowery Ridge and the Carson River creates two distinct park areas. They are referred to as the Upper Park and the Lower Park respectively [Map 1.1, General Park Aerial].

The upper park lies on steep ground west of the highway where a very different situation exists. The vegetation is low and sparse, including sagebrush, grasses and occasional cacti. Situated in the upper park are the remains of the Rock Point Mill, originally constructed in 1861 to process the ores of the Comstock Mines. These remains are historically significant. The ruins include a concrete water storage tank, a reservoir and head-gage, stamp battery footings, building foundations, rock retaining walls, waterways and “hermits cave”.

Multiple historic sites surround the main Mill site. Old Highway 50 runs through the upper park and is also the route of the Emigrant Trail, the Pony Express, the overland stages and the overland telegraph. In the lower park east of the highway, the riverbed, flood plain and recent terraces of the river form the park landscape. Here, the vegetation is a typical Great Basin riparian gallery forest of cottonwood, willow, alder and non-native Russian olive. Cottonwood understory and higher areas within the lower park are made up of sagebrush, buckbrush and native and non-native grasses. Further discussion of habitats is in Section III.

2. Adjacent Property Ownership

Land ownership surrounding Dayton State Park includes private agricultural lands to the northeast and north. To the southeast and the far northwest, are private suburban home developments. Directly to the south are business properties and single family mobile home dwellings. The Bureau of Land Management administers Public Lands on Flowery Ridge to the West of the Park [Map 1.2, Land Ownership].

3. Goals and Objectives

Management of all of Nevada’s State Parks must follow goals and objectives as set forth in the Division’s policy manual.

Goals and Objectives Specific to Dayton State Park

The 1990 Park Plan: Dayton State Park preserves an important part of the history of Nevada. It highlights an interesting and vital natural system, that of the Carson River. The 1990 plan concept grew out of recognition of this dual role. The following are the goals of the current 1990 master plan:

- Dayton State Park serves as the State's contribution to preserving the heritage of the Comstock.

- The Rock Point Mill Site should be the prominent historic feature of the park and be easily accessible from all park areas. Development around the mill site should compliment and enhance its historic nature.
- The natural system of the river and the environment it creates and supports should be the second prominent feature and emphasis of the park.
- Activities provided should allow the visitor a chance to explore and enjoy the natural amenities of the area.
- Recreational opportunities should be provided in balance with the natural experience of this small park.

The 1990 Dayton State Park Master Plan proposed strengthening the character of both the upper and lower park areas and linking them together. In doing so, providing visitors an opportunity to experience the unique site history is a primary plan focus, along with opportunities to experience the park's various natural amenities.

Upper Park: Development of the Rock Point Mill Site occurred with the addition of the underpass linking the upper and Lower Park and new kiosks.

An Equestrian Station was planned to enhance the upper park as well but has not been developed. A staff residence was to be added in the upper park but also did not occur. The lack of development was due to funding constraints.



Highway Underpass

Lower Park: Providing diverse recreational opportunities for a growing population formed another strong plan element. Plans for the lower park were to provide expanded camping and picnicking opportunities. Campground expansion has not occurred, but picnicking expansion has. Another goal was to rebuild and expand the trail system, enhance visitor information, and a park office which all did occur. These facilities were to aid in meeting recreation and administrative needs while respecting the tranquil experience the park provided.

4. Issues

a. SCORP Identified Issues

Nevada's 2003 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) identifies major concerns shared by most Nevadans relating to outdoor recreation.

The SCORP identified eight General Category Issues, all of which directly relate to Dayton State Park in some way. They will be considered in development of the plan.

Issue # 1

Public Access to Public Lands: There is a growing need to protect, maintain, and increase public access to public lands for the greatest diversity of outdoor recreational users.

Issue #2

Funding: Existing levels of outdoor recreation funding are inadequate to meet the recreation needs of Nevada.

Issue # 3

Recreational Trails: There is a growing need to provide recreational trails and pathways throughout the state, in both urban and rural areas.

Issue # 4

Protection of Nevada's Natural, Cultural, and Scenic Resources: Protection of natural resources needs to be put in balance with users. Create opportunities for the users to participate in the protection, i.e., as site stewards—mandate that a majority of fees paid in a recreation area stay in that area for improvements and maintenance. Citizens acknowledge this as an investment and a way to participate in the conservation of these resources.

Issue # 5

Water Resources Are Vital Components of Nevada's Recreation Base: Water resources must be protected to maintain the needed quantity, quality, and accessibility for public recreation. Recreation and wildlife depend on the limited water resources in Nevada.

Issue # 6

Interpretation and Education: Encourage, fund, and provide environmental, cultural, and heritage interpretation and educational programs and opportunities, especially outdoor opportunities, throughout Nevada.

Issue # 7

Nevada's Growing Population Increases Demand: Nevada's growing population is placing an increasing demand on recreation resources and recreation suppliers at all levels, statewide. New resources need to be identified, acquired, funded, and developed.

Issue # 8

Coordination and Cooperation: Coordination and cooperation between public and private recreation providers at all levels is very important. More true support from private citizens, user groups, and governmental entities (local, state, and federal), are important partnerships to pursue.

b. User Conflicts/Visitor Impacts

Visitor impacts on the historic features continue to occur and include vandalism and taking of historic artifacts. Management practices may have become necessary to balance protection with public access and interpretation of the site.

c. Public Identified Issues

- ◆ The public has identified lack of developed access to the river for kayaking and canoeing an issue. Connectivity between river sections is lacking and development of parking and river access would allow for increased quality of use on the Carson River.
- ◆ Developing interpretive facilities at the mill site, possibly including a historic walking tour connecting the mill areas with the historic district of Dayton.
- ◆ Lack of regional connectivity of trails on the lower park with the upper park and on to roads in the mountains that would eventually lead to Virginia City, other State Parks and link with other trail systems.

d. Local Political Subdivision Identified Issues

These following goals/issues were taken from the draft 2006 County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the current Lyon County Open Space Plan:

- ◆ Both plans identified the riparian zone along the Carson River as very important in the management of its open space wildlife habitat, wetlands, and recreation access.
- ◆ They noted the importance of public recreation areas throughout the County, and public trails development is a high priority.

- ◆ Noted was the importance of protecting Historic landmarks related especially to the Comstock and ensuring that they are open to public use and tourism.
- ◆ Lyon Co. also pointed out the loss of agriculture and open space to development as an issue in their open space plan.
- ◆ Lyon County has a goal in the open space plan to “...provide multi-use facilities which incorporate open space, active and passive recreation opportunities, maximize access to water resources, maintain wildlife habitat, provide trails and maximize maintenance resources. Preserve and/or acquire recreation and open space easements along county rivers.”

e. Governor’s Tourism Program Identified Issues

June 9, 2006 - During a tour of the Carson River via raft, representatives from The Board of Tourism identified connectivity of trail systems and the positive impact it would have on economics of the region.

f. Environmental Considerations

The Carson River is a large component of the park in several ways. The river runs through the east side of the lower park area. Scenic value and access are the primary issues. The portion of the river that flows through the park is negligible in terms of riverine system management but high in terms of access for use.

The property adjacent to the park to the east and part of the opposite bank of the river is privately owned and currently being developed without significant buffer areas. This is impacting the access from the east and the scenic views to the east.

The primary environmental factor in development and management of this state park in 1987 was the dynamic and flood-prone Carson River. This concern is even more applicable to the park today due to surrounding encroachment and development in the 100 year floodplain and the resulting impacts on the park [Map 1.3, Flood Plain].

The 100 year floodplain encompasses all of the currently developed facilities, as well as most areas available for future development. In addition, the river itself is continuing to change course due to these development impacts through the majority of the valley and impacts are fairly pronounced in the park.

Susceptibility to wildfire is a current issue. A fuels management plan was written in 2004 by John Copeland, Nevada Division of Forestry. This plan

identified the fire hazard associated with the mature and decadent brush stands throughout the parks lower area and ladder fuels under the overstory of trees. Plans are to reduce the fuels in the campgrounds, trail areas and interpretive sites as well as the park interior and areas bordering Hwy 50.

Nevada listed noxious weeds in the lower park have been raised as an issue. There is a plan in progress to address those concerns and is discussed in Section III of this plan.

C. PARK HISTORY

The following excerpt is from the Previous 1990 Master Plan.

1. History of the Area

Western Nevada, with its temperate climate and abundant food resources, has been inhabited since prehistoric times. An extension of the Pleistocene Lake Lahontan came up the Dayton Valley, and the delta of the Carson River at that point was an attractive environment for Early Man. The boundary between the Washoe and Paiute Indian territories ran through the Dayton area. The two tribes were generally friendly and traded among one another. Both tribes were nomadic in nature, following food sources that were available seasonally. They collected pine nuts in the Virginia Range and Pine Nut Mountains, fished in the Carson River and hunted game in the Carson Valley, among others. Both tribes claim to have had winter villages in the Dayton area, though no archaeological evidence of such long-term population concentrations has been found (1978, 1990 Park Master Plan).

Located at the foot of the famous Gold Canyon, Dayton is one of the state's colorful pioneer towns. It is quickly expanding with new subdivisions public service facilities and retail. Dayton originated in 1849 as a tent trading post to serve travelers along the Emigrant Trail. The Comstock grew in importance and Dayton, with its abundant water resources became the primary ore-milling area. From that point, Dayton entered Western history and legend.

Spafford Hall constructed the first permanent structure in Dayton in 1851. This structure, known as Hall's Station, consisted of a log building used as a dwelling and trading post. The trading post's location on the overland emigrant route generated a good deal of trade with California-bound wagon trains. Later, Hall's station serviced the prospectors who were working the gravel deposits in nearby Gold Canyon for placer gold.

In 1854, James McMarlin, Hall's assistant, bought Hall's Station which then became known as "McMarlin's Station". During the next several years the

settlement around the trading post grew. Small quantities of gold discovered in Gold Canyon encouraged this growth. Gradually, as California mines played out, tales of Nevada gold induced discouraged California Miners to try their luck in this area. In 1856, Chinese workers built Rose Ditch, a flume project to aid placer mining in Gold Canyon with water from the Carson River. As the Chinese settled and increased in number to nearly 200, the area became known as “Chinatown”.

Dayton’s fortunes were about to skyrocket. In 1859, James Finney and three other prospectors struck a rich deposit of free gold on a little hill at the head of Gold Canyon. Finney is a character important in the story of the Comstock. Not only did he discover a rich gold deposit in Gold Canyon, he also lent his nickname, “Old Virginny” to Virginia City. It is rumored his remains lie unmarked in the old cemetery south of Dayton.)



Stevenson's Mill

Shortly after, several miles northward in Six-Mile Canyon, Peter O’Riley and Pat McLaughlin discovered a strata of rich, decomposed silver ore. The value of this area quickly became known throughout California and the rush to Nevada began.

The discovery of the Comstock Lode was, surprisingly, a deterrent to the initial growth of Dayton as many of its inhabitants moved to Virginia City and Gold Hill, the site of the new discoveries. The town was reduced to five or six houses and its business nearly dried up. However, the fall of 1859 signaled an important turning point in the town’s future. Dayton, with an ample supply of water from the nearby Carson River and the most accessible point from all parts of the territory, was a natural choice for the milling of Comstock ore.

Four pioneer mill owners began operations in the area. Hastings and Woodworth built an ore reduction mill a short distance up the river. In addition, Logan and Holmes started a four stamp quartz mill on the flat, a quarter of a mile south of town.

In 1861, Chinatown was renamed, first to “Nevada City”, and later to “Dayton”. The inhabitants adopted the change in honor of John Day, surveyor of the town site who later became County Surveyor, and in 1870, was elected Nevada’s Surveyor General. On November 25, 1861, the Territorial Legislature picked Dayton as the seat of Lyon County, one of the nine counties designated at its initial session.

Dayton, in the early 1860’s, was transformed from a position as a trading post for the miners and prospectors of nearby Gold Canyon into a town of considerable proportions. Main Street supported many thriving business establishments and along Pike Street, homes and stores lined the road almost to the Rock Point Mill. By 1865, with a population of 2500, Dayton supported 21 quartz mills, a school house, seven hotels, five saloons, three groceries and lumber yards, a brewery, a military company and several fraternal Lodges, including the Free Masons, Odd Fellows and Druids. Of the several meeting halls constructed, only the Odeon, built in 1862, has withstood the test of time. Damaged in two fires, it was rebuilt both times and remains standing today. Among the mills operating at the time were the Rock Point, Birdsall, Mineral Rapids, Dayton, Freeborn and Sheldon, Sutro’s, Franklin, Atlantic, and Gautier’s and Succor Mills. All were situated along the Carson River in the vicinity of Dayton.

Dayton also served as a wood and timber supply center for the Comstock. The nearby Como and Palmyra areas supplied wood from the pine-nut covered hills. Long teams with 14-16 mules and double-action wagons regularly passed through Dayton loaded with lumber products for the Comstock. On the return trip, ore was brought from the mines to the Dayton mills. From as far away as California’s Alpine County, the wood drives down the Carson River were an annual spring and early summer event during the bonanza days. Cordwood floated down the waterway and was removed at various mills along the river while the bulk of the drive landed at Dayton. All of this provided employment for many of the town’s inhabitants.

Despite the appearance of a busy community, Dayton began to decline when its many reduction plants were in excess of demand. This factor, plus the disastrous fires of July, 1866 and July, 1870 both of which nearly destroyed the town, hastened its decline. By 1870 the population of Dayton had dwindled to about 900.

Toward the end of the 1870's, renewed interest in the region was generated when the Virginia and Truckee Railroad Company announced their intention to extend its tracks from Mound House Station to the untapped Nevada regions of Esmeralda County via Dayton. Eventually, this spur, called the Carson and Colorado Railroad extended from Dayton into Owens Valley, California, 300 miles distant. Dayton's milling interests temporarily revived with the advent of the new lines. The first shipment of ore as well as the initial carload of freight over the C&C RR originated in Dayton. The construction of the Sutro tunnel from 1872-78 also brought increased prosperity.

In spite of the renewed activity, Dayton's fortunes continued to dwindle throughout the remainder of the 19th century. A scheme to dredge the Carson River and recover the imagined fortunes of gold and silver found there seemed one way to turn around the areas' fate. A large suction pump and bucket dredge were built for this purpose, but several years and thousands of dollars later, the operation proved disappointing. By 1900, the population of Dayton had declined to only 500 residents.

In 1905, the Tonopah and Goldfield booms again brought ore to Dayton. A large switching yard and depot of the Carson and Colorado Railroad was built in Dayton to handle the continuous shipments of supplies. This upturn was short-lived, however, when mills in the Tonopah area began to process the ore locally.

On May 15, 1908, another disastrous fire nearly destroyed the town, including the Lyon County Courthouse. Immediately after the fire, Yerington sought the county seat and in 1911, the legislature approved the move. This signaled the end of an era for Dayton.

Moving forward almost 80 years to the period of the 1990 Master Plan for Dayton State Park, 1987-90: In the late 1980's, the downtown area of Dayton, at least to the passing motorist, had an almost ghost-like appearance. Yet it still retained an atmosphere of nostalgia quite unlike any other Nevada town. The old firehouse-jail combination, Golden Eagle Boarding House, Hall's Trading Post site, and the right-of-way of the narrow-gauge Dayton, Sutro, and Carson Valley Railroad remain as mementoes of earlier days. On Pike Street, off of the main US highway 50, the Odeon Hall housed a museum and art gallery. Also on Pike Street, the old Dayton High School, built out of the ruins of the Lyon County Courthouse, served as a community center.

The Leslie Hay Barn built in 1861, once used to stable camels, still stood. The camels were part of an experiment in the transportation of salt between Virginia City and the salt deposits east of Fort Churchill. The union Hotel still existed as did the old post office, once used as a Pony express Station. On the way to the cemetery is the "bluestone building", originally the Bluestone Manufacturing Company of Fred Birdsall. Bluestone was a byproduct of sulfuric

acid, used to reduce ores. And, of course, the remains of the Rock Point Mill were preserved within the confines of Dayton State Park.

In the early 1990's, population growth and urban sprawl in and around the Dayton Valley area was taking place north and northeast of the park, with residential and commercial development.

The situation is quite different in 2006. To illustrate the significant growth; Dayton has it's own public high school with over 600 students and three primary/middle schools with over 1500 students. This is four times the population in 1900. The population in the year 2000 was almost 6000. The Rock Point Mill was dismantled and moved to the Donavon Mill site in Silver City sometime in the 1920's. In 1954, The Nevada Department of Highways acquired the property from the then owners, the South Comstock Tailings Disposal Company, as part of a right-of-way acquisition program, (now the right-of-way for US Highway 50).

2. History of Dayton State Park

Rock Point Quartz Mill

One of the most well-known and longest running ore mills and reduction plants around Dayton was the Rock Point Quartz Mill. The Rock Point Mill was built on the present-day site of Dayton State Park in 1861 by Hugh Logan, F.R. Logan, James P. Holmes, and John Black at a reported cost of \$200,000.00. Remains from this mill tell an important story and is the significant historical resource which supported the Park's designation.



At the time the Rock Point Mill was constructed, it was one of the largest in the Territory. The main building was 90 by 100 feet and outfitted with eight batteries of 5 stamps each or a total of 40 stamps with a capacity of crushing 50 tons of ore per day. Water, which supplied the necessary power, was brought 2,000 feet from the Rock Point Dam in a wooden Flume.

The mill soon came under the ownership of the Imperial Silver Mining Company of Gold Hill who shipped their ore from the Alta Mine to Dayton for reduction. An addition to the site, built in 1864, contain 16 stamps together with associated machinery and cost about \$93,000.00.

In 1882, a fire completely destroyed the Rock Point Mill. C.C. Stevenson, later Governor of Nevada, leased the mill site in 1883 and moved the former Lady Bryan stamp mill to the location. Stevenson's Mill ran periodically for the next decade, subject to the whims of the Carson River and the market price of silver. Originally, Stevenson's Kentucky Mine, located in Gold Hill, supplied the ore to the mill. In 1888, a contract with the Save Mine brought ore directly to the stamp mill via a narrow-gauge spur track of the Carson and Colorado Railroad.

The Rock Point mill was often forced into durations of inactivity due to the character of the mining industry. In 1893, the C&C RR removed its spur track. In 1898, Herman Davis of Dayton bought the mill and operated it as the Nevada Reduction Works. Davis' Mill worked nearly all of the tailings in the vicinity. In the early 1900's, some of the first ore from the new camp at Tonopah was processed through the mill and reworked in the leaching plant for their remaining values. The reduction works burned down on May 3, 1909. The Lyon County sheriff temporarily took ownership, and in 1912, Mr. Hotaling bought and rebuilt the plant as a 40 stamp mill known as the Nevada Mining, Reduction and Power Company. In addition to necessary buildings, the mill operated an aerial tramway to transport ore for the Hayward Mine in Silver City.

3. Park Authorization

Dayton State Park was deeded to the Nevada Department of Transportation in 1954 and was designated a state park in 1977. Dayton State Park was officially created on May 9, 1977, with the passage of Assembly Bill No. 524 by the fifty-ninth session of the Nevada State Legislature. The bill authorized the Department of Highways to convey land to the state of Nevada for use as a state park.

II. REGIONAL INFLUENCES

A. DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Historic

The Dayton area has experienced boom and bust population trends since it was first settled. After its mining days, Dayton's population continuously dwindled for decades. In 1920, the population of Lyon County stood at 4,078 residents. From 1920 to 1950, the county's population fluctuated slightly, with 3,810 residents in 1930, 4,076 in 1940, and 3,679 in 1950. Since 1950, the number of residents in Lyon County has grown steadily, and in 1980 reached 13,594. From 1981 to 1990, the population of Lyon County continued to grow, from 14,300 in 1981 to 19,636 in 1990.

Substantial development is taking place in the Dayton Valley, and the population of the area is growing rapidly. The construction of single family homes and condominiums in Dayton and the surrounding region and the emphasis on commercial and industrial development throughout Dayton Valley will support and encourage this growth trend.

2. Existing/Projected

The population of Lyon County is expected to continue to grow steadily over the next 20 years. State of Nevada Demographer predicts Lyon County population growth to increase over 33 thousand more people by 2024.

Lyon Count population Growth in the four year between 2000 and 2004 was from 34,501 to over 43 thousand, a 25% increase in those four years.

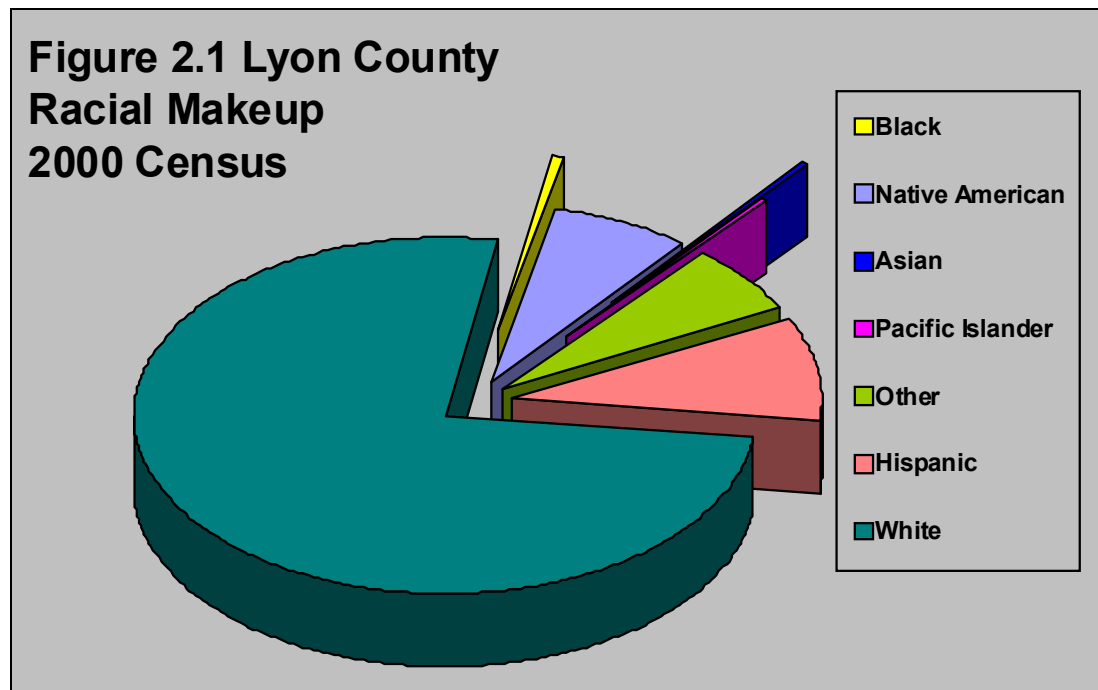
Bottom line for planning is an increasingly urban and suburban trend in the surrounding area and therefore a change in the user type and demand.

a. Lyon County Demographics

Lyon County population and demographic information data used below is draft and is used for planning purposes. This is due to the extreme dynamics of growth in Lyon county and specially Dayton between the 2000 census and 2006. The future of Dayton State Park Management will be greatly impacted by these numbers and trends. Supply and demand is directly influenced by the character of the demographics.

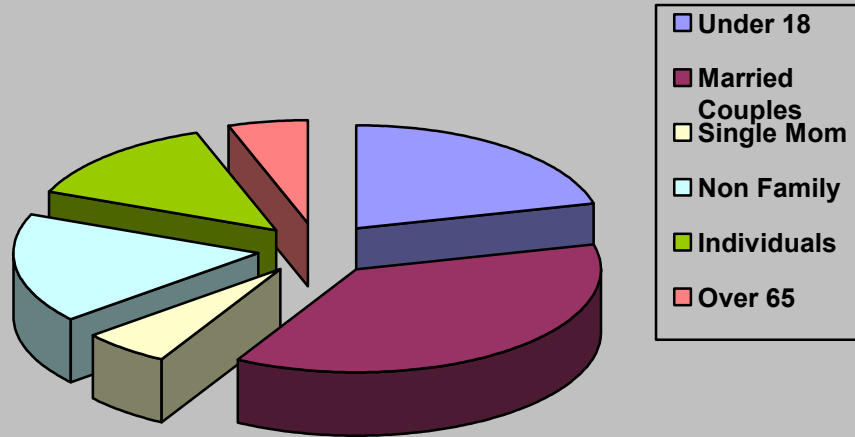
As of the census² of 2000, there were 34,501 people, 13,007 households, and 9,443 families residing in the county. The population density was 7/km² (17/mi²). There were 14,279 housing units at an average density of 3/km² (7/mi²).

The racial makeup of the county in 2002 was 88.62% White, 0.65% Black or African American, 2.45% Native American, 0.61% Asian, 0.14% Pacific Islander, 4.59% from other races, and 2.94% from two or more races. 10.97% of the population Hispanic or Latino of any race (Figure 2.1).



There were 13,007 households of which 33.20% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 58.40% were married couples, 9.1% had a female householder with no husband present, and 27.40% were non-families. 21.40% of all households were made up of individuals and 8.30% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.61 and the average family size was 3.02 (Figure 2.2).

**Figure 2.2 Lyon County
Household Demographics
2000 Census**



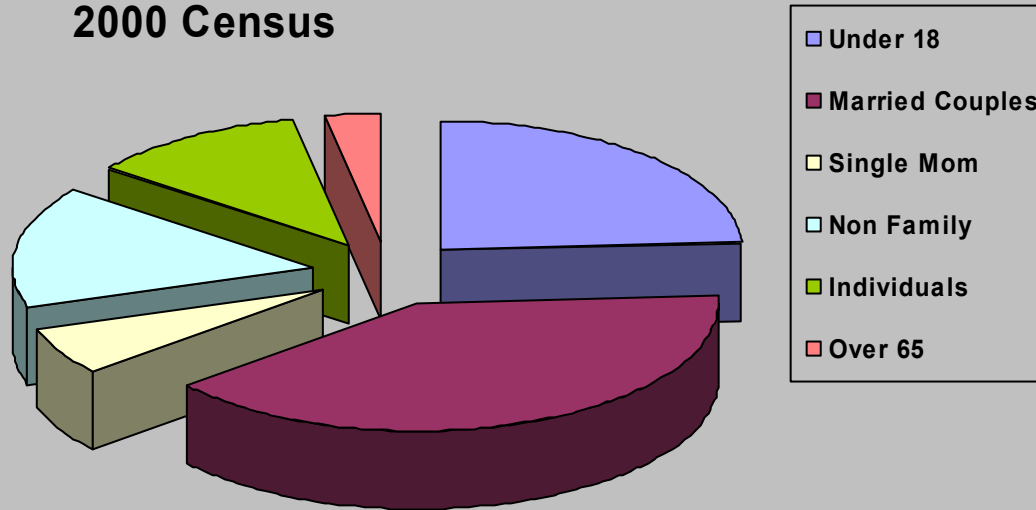
The age demographics of Lyon County was spread out with 27.1% under the age of 18, 6.6% from 18 to 24, 27.3% from 25 to 44, 25.2% from 45 to 64, and 13.7% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 38 years .

b. Dayton Demographics

Dayton is located at 39°15'6" North, 119°33'43" West (39.251707, -119.561943)^{GR1}. According to the United States Census Bureau, the CDP has a total area of 82.2 km² (31.7 mi²). 82.1 km² (31.7 mi²) of it is land and 0.1 km² (0.04 mi²) of it is water. The total area is 0.06% water. Dayton is a census-designated place (CDP) located in Lyon County, Nevada. As of the census^{GR2} of 2000, there were 5,907 people, 2,198 households, and 1,674 families residing in the CDP. The population density was 71.9/km² (186.3/mi²). There were 2,322 housing units at an average density of 28.3/km² (73.2/mi²) (Figure 2.3).

The racial makeup of the Dayton was very similar to that of Lyon County; 91.42% White, 0.36% African American, 1.03% Native American, 1.03% Asian, 0.15% Pacific Islander, 3.84% from other races, and 2.17% from two or more races. 8.80% of the population were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

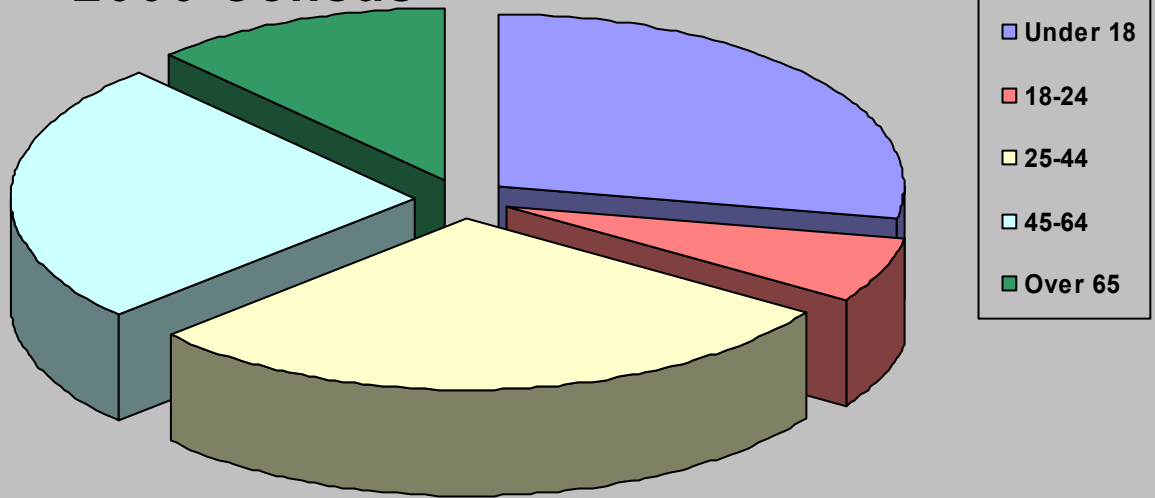
**Figure 2.3 Dayton
Household Demographics
2000 Census**



*Dayton demographics
show a large percentage
of family households rather
than a retirement community.*

There is a slightly larger proportion of families in Dayton when compared to overall demographics of the County. There were 2,198 households of which 37.7% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 61.6% were married couples, 9.6% had a female householder with no husband present, and 23.8% were non-families. 18.1% of all households were made up of individuals and 4.6% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older (Figure 2.4).

**Figure 2.4 Dayton
Age Demographics
2000 Census**



The average household size was 2.69 and the average family size was 3.03. In the CDP the population was spread out with 28.1% under the age of 18, 6.1% from 18 to 24, 29% from 25 to 44, 25% from 45 to 64, and 11.9% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 37 years.

B. RECREATIONAL DEMAND

1. Effect of Population Increases in Creating Demand

The steady rise in population of Lyon County and particularly the Dayton area has placed an increasing demand on recreation facilities in the area at all levels. However, resident populations require certain park features not necessarily appropriate for a State Park to provide. If local recreation providers cannot keep pace with the region's growth, residents will apply increasing pressures on the State Park system to meet their needs.

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west would help to meet the demand for the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

2. Effect of Socioeconomic Data on Demand

A number of data sources provide insight into the socioeconomic condition of regional residents and park visitors. This information can be used to help determine the ability of regional residents to participate in the full range of recreational activities available. 2000 Census data for the county and Dayton show a relatively fairly high percentage of poverty level families and senior citizens.

The population of the area leans towards families, and therefore affordable family and group activities areas are needed.

The median income for a household in the county was \$40,699, and the median income for a family was \$44,887. Males had a median income of \$34,034 versus \$25,914 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$18,543.

A total of 10.4% of the population and 7.2% of families were below the poverty line. 14.1% of those under the age of 18 and 7.1% of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line [Lyon co. Website and Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia].

As of the 2000 census, the median income for a household in Dayton was \$43,599, and the median income for a family was \$46,859. Males had a median income of \$33,038 versus \$26,140 for females. The per capita income for Dayton was \$18,417.

A total of 6.7% of the population and 5.3% of families were below the poverty line. 8.2% of those under the age of 18 and 5.5% of those 65 and older were living below the poverty line.

a. Visitation Characteristics

Although there are several sources of survey information, the statistical confidence is lacking in regards to specific information for Dayton State Park and in comparative analysis of the data. Therefore, Regional and Statewide information is used and general conclusions will be deduced from this information.

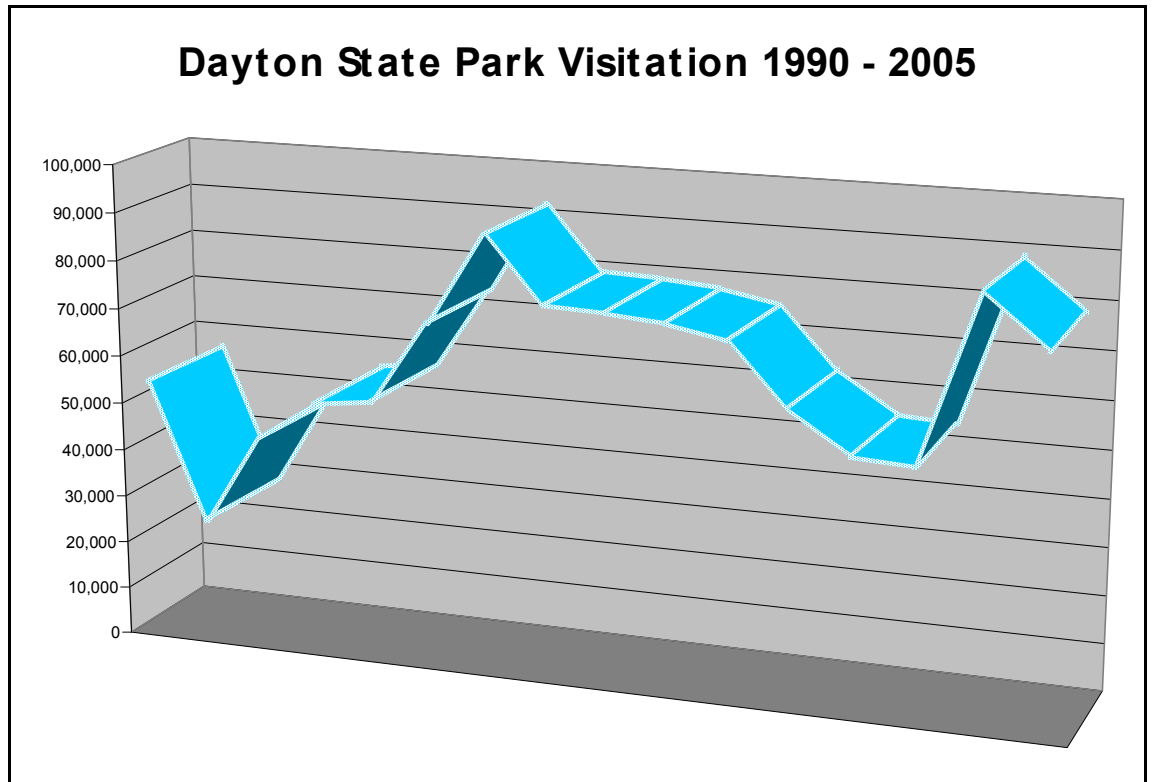


Figure 2.5

Visitor Data Collected by State Parks from 1990 through 2005 shows a steady increase in visitor use at the park (Figure 2.5)

There is a steady increase in use after the 1997 and 2002 flood events back up to over 80,000. This information on visitation is derived from estimates based primarily on vehicle counters.

b. Activity Preferences

Survey information comes from several sources. They are the 1987-88 State Park User Survey, the 1986 Statewide Recreation Telephone Survey from the earlier plan, the 2002 - 2005 Survey Report Card Summaries, 1999-2002 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), 2003 Nevada and the Nevada Market Region Report, Nevada 2005 State Recreational Trails Plan, and the results of the 2003 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Program (SCORP). In summary, The 2003 SCORP identified traditional activities such as family/ group gatherings, trail related activities both motorized and non-motorized, nature viewing, photography, education sites and outdoor events as types most desired. This is a change from the 1988 survey only in the area of camping which dropped dramatically in popularity from 1988 to 2003.

The Nevada 2005 State Recreational Trail Plan Survey provides information on demands for trail activities. The following is the Statewide percent of trail users who indicated participation in trail activity in twelve months preceding the survey (Figure 2.6).

Activity	2005 Trail Plan (%)
Walking	55.3
Hiking	36.5
OHV riding	18.8
Jogging/running	15.6
Tour/regular bike riding	16
ATV riding	10
Mountain bike riding	10
Horseback riding	6
Rafting	6
Backpacking	5
Dirt bike racing	4
Kayaking	4
Canoeing	3
Snowshoeing	3
Cross country skiing	2
Snowmobiling	2

Figure 2.6

3. Demand for Existing Activities/Facilities

The most popular statewide activities according to the user surveys shown above must now be compared to what our park users are asking us to provide for specific to Dayton State Park. The public was asked: “If provided, which facilities would you utilize at Dayton State park”. Figure 2.7 displays the most desired activities/facilities derived from this data.

DESIRED ACTIVITY/FACILITY
Adventure trail connectivity
Interpretive center and trails
Group overnight facilities
Equestrian area
RV hookups/group site

Figure 2.7

In application of Statewide and regional data to Dayton State Park we can see that users are asking specifically for group facilities and those amenities associated, for more trails and trail connectivity, and in Dayton’s case, equestrian trails and facilities associated with equestrian use.

The 2005 State Trails Plan survey found that those who participated in a motorized activity reported higher numbers of miles traveled, with averages between 35.81 miles for OHV riding, to 22.78 miles for ATV riding. Biking and Equestrian use ranged from 8-11 miles or more. Hiking and running averaged 3-5 miles.

This infers access to longer sections of trail (connectivity to BLM roads and trails) for equestrian use and facilities to park, load, and unload.

C. RECREATIONAL SUPPLY

1. Dayton State Park

Dayton State Park provides the park visitor with the opportunity to experience the scenic Carson River and the historic Rock Point Mill site. Existing facilities include:

- One large pavilion group/grill site
- Multiple family picnicking/grill sites
- One campground with 10 20 sites
- There are a few sites large enough for RV camping without hookups
- One dump station (now closed)
- There are a total of 2.52 miles of trails, 7 are for non-motorized use
- One trail is open to licensed motorized use although it is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long and open to licensed vehicles only. It is basically an access road to adjacent public lands rather than a trail.
- Over 60 parking spaces, none designed for RV/pull-through.

2. Regional Facilities

Additional state facilities in the region are Fort Churchill State Historic Park, Lahontan State Recreation Area and Washoe Lake State Park. These areas provide activities similar to those found at Dayton, though they also provide one or more of the following: lake and beach access for swimming and boating, equestrian and bike trails, and developed historic interpretive areas.

Other public recreation providers in the region include, Carson City, Douglas, Washoe and Lyon counties, the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The county agencies provide day use facilities such as picnic areas, ball fields, tennis courts, golf courses, turf areas and tot lots.

Douglas and Washoe counties also offer overnight facilities similar to Dayton State Park. The federal agencies provide trails for horses, OHV's, and hikers. There are currently no public equestrian facilities in the area although both Lyon County and private entities have facilities in the planning stage. Overnight camping is allowed in some of these areas also, and in nearby Lahontan and Churchill State Parks which are outside the urban areas. RV sites are currently being developed in town, the number of sites is less than 10.

D. SUPPLY/DEMAND ANALYSIS

1. SCORP

The 2003 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan found that the population in Nevada grew by 66% from 1990 to 2000, the fastest percentage growth rate in the United States.

Lyon County boasted a 72.5% change from 1990-2000. Due to this population increase, recreation participation estimates are projected to increase significantly, although not necessarily proportional to the population increase.

Local Community Needs: The SCORP found that Nevadans cited parks/greenbelts, children parks/playgrounds, bicycling trails, soccer fields, and swimming pools and areas as the five outdoor recreation areas and facilities most needed in their local community.

The SCORP also found that the top five things Nevadans Age 16 years and older wanted to use parks for were walking (day hiking), family gatherings, wildlife viewing, photography, picnicking and nature centers/historical sites.

Outside the Local Community Needs: The SCORP found that Nevadans cited camping, fishing, parks, hiking and biking as the five most needed outside their local community.

Dayton State Park was traditionally meant to be a park “outside the local community”. This situation has changed and there is a strong leaning towards local community needs due to the changes in the surrounding area in terms of demographics, population and land use.

These shifts in demand will also impact Lahontan State Recreation Area and Ft. Churchill State Park. Those “out of town” facilities/demands may have to be provided at other parks in the region, both State and County.

The demands of the local community far exceeds that which Dayton State Park can provide under the direction of the 1990 Master Plan. It is imperative that State Parks works closely with recreation planners within Dayton and Lyon County to find the best mix and location for providing for the needs of the local and regional demand. Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west would help to increase the use of the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

2. Projected Numbers and Trends (Region Wide)

a. Access/Connector Trails

The 2005 Trail plan survey data and projected use survey data through 2010 acknowledged running, biking and OHV (motorized use) as significant uses/demands that must be considered in the master planning process.

Adventure trails, long distance trail running and mountain biking are fast growing and demanding sports in Nevada (X-terra race, Wild Nevada and other large events) and throughout Nevada's extended marketing region of California, and other western states. OHV and ATV riding as well must be considered in provision of access to connector trails.

b. Water Sports/Access

Due to the park's proximity to the Carson River, kayaking, canoeing and rafting have also become more popular and a regional water trail that will one day flow through Dayton State Park is being planned under a separate process at this time. The water trail currently ends at the Santa Maria Ranch, Lyon Co. Park, just north of the Park.

The County Park will be providing free river access, take out and parking with picnic areas for boaters. There are water hazards below the County Park that prohibit the river trail being marketed past that point at this time until they are resolved for public safety reasons.

These outdoor sports are gaining popularity nationally and worldwide. Consideration of these demands on local facilities is in sync with the Nevada Market Region and would provide for local and state demands as well.

3. Impact on Park and Carrying Capacity and the Role of Dayton State Park in Meeting Demand.

The current demand analysis for the Park includes these priority activities:

- River Use and Access
- Trails, trail access and regional connectivity
- Group Use, both camping and picnicking
- Enjoyment of the outdoors, and scenic views

a. Fee Compliance

Dayton State Park lacks year-round staff and so strictly relies on the honor system for visitors to pay park fees in the winter. This has proved to be minimally successful in the past.



b. River Use and Access

Nevada's outdoor recreation picture has a strong orientation to water resources. Since water resources are basically finite, it is unrealistic to suggest increasing supply to meet the demand. Dayton State Park in particular, is receiving requests for development of defined access for boaters, fishermen, and family day-use.

Two pedestrian bridges have been built across irrigation channels to allow access to the river and are connected by trails.

The Carson River Subconservancy, public, and the Governor's Board on Tourism are developing plans for a "Carson River Trail" which includes water craft, as well as support for river trails. Lyon County is addressing river trails in their current Master Planning process as well, due to the regional and local demands.

River access in other areas is being developed by Lyon County in the form of easements and land donations by developers as development

occurs. These other access areas include toilet facilities, parking and trails. There are boating access and fishing piers being planned by Lyon County upstream from the Park.

c. Interpretive Plan

The current interpretive plan (2001) objective is to increase visitor numbers and to improve the visitor experience at the Park. Current interpretative season runs from May-September and is based on a good percentage of local residents from Lyon County and Carson City. The plan directs interpretation to inform and educate visitors of the park's natural environment and cultural history. This included the construction of interpretive displays, kiosks and trail markers to display that concept

d. Trails, Access and Regional Connectivity

Nevada State Trails Plan, 2006: There are three basic trail areas: Along the Carson Riverbank, throughout the lower park to the pedestrian underpass, and the upper unit around the Rock Point Mill site. The State Trails Plan identified eight trail segments within the park totaling only 2.52 miles (Figure 2.8). Seven trails are open to non-motorized use and one trail is open to licensed motorized use. The trails have been destroyed by flooding in the past several years and will need to be redesigned and rebuilt to standards.

TRAIL NAME	MILES
Comfort Station Path	0.08
Mary's Trail	0.59
Mill Pond Trail	0.03
Old Highway 50	0.59
River Interpretive Trail	0.17
River Trail	0.64
Rock Mill Trail	0.29
Town Path	0.13

Figure 2.8

Trailheads include a kiosk to the riverbank trail and a sign only in the campground loop and the north side of the comfort station directing users to the Rock Point Mill site and the underpass.

The 1990 plan identified the need for connectivity between Dayton State Park and other trail systems in the region. This demand is still present and strong in 2006. Due to the small size and physical limitations of the park, it cannot actually provide long trail system demands for any of these uses. The Park can however, provide for access to connector trails. The limitations on those trails outside the Park, by the adjacent land owners/management agencies, will help to determine the type of facilities that Dayton State Park could potentially provide.

The 1990 plan proposed providing facilities to support a State Park Connector Trail that would use Dayton State Park as the “hub”. This trail system would connect five State Park facilities in the region. They are: Lake Tahoe- Nevada State Park, Washoe Lake State Park, Dayton State Park, Fort Churchill State Historic Park and Lahontan State Recreation Area.

The proposed trail system, for the most part, would be on public land and would use the scenic Carson River Canyon Pony Express Trail. This trail system could also potentially connect Virginia City, Gold Hill and Silver City, completing an eight-destination adventure trail system. Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west would help to increase the use of the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

e. Winter Use

Dayton State Park is at an elevation that does not provide for long term winter sports use on a regular basis. Several summer uses can be extended year round in the Park, dependent upon weather. Again, connector trail availability outside the Park is dependent upon weather and the land management agencies’ regulations and closures for those individual trails. Winter and early spring flooding will also hold claim over availability of facilities within the Park.

f. Group Sites, Camping and Picnicking

Camping in the region continues to be popular. Demand for both individual and group camping facilities currently exceeds the supply of those facilities. In addition, recreation projections show the number of campers increasing in the coming years.

Dayton State Park is no longer situated outside of the urban area. It therefore is not being used regularly for overnight camping. Park staff and public have commented that the typical users are vagrants passing through. There have been comments from the public on “safety” during day-use due to the presence of vagrants “living in the campground”. Furthermore, the “outdoor” experience is being hampered significantly by noise and sights of the urban environment.

Group camping reserved sites have been formally and informally requested for use by Scouts and other youth groups as well as equestrian and RV groups.

Picnicking is and will continue to be the top recreational activity for the region and especially for Dayton State Park. Again, recreation projections show a significantly increasing need for picnicking facilities throughout the region. Dayton State Park currently provides both group and family picnicking opportunities in the form of the pavilion group site and individual picnicking sites. The increasing population and urban trend of the surrounding environment is creating a demand for design of facilities to provide for larger groups.

E. REGIONAL LAND USE TRENDS

1. Ownership and Land Use

Patterns and Trends - Private parties own the majority of land surrounding Dayton State Park and also the majority of land in Dayton Valley [Map 1.2, Ownership]. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) owns land abutting the park to the west on Flowery Ridge which is interspersed with large tracts of private land. Additional federal holdings in the Virginia and Pinenut ranges surround the valley. No evidence exists to indicate that the ownership patterns of the region will change. Evidence does exist to support changes in land uses however.

Land uses surrounding the park include residential housing, general commercial development, agriculture and vacant land. [Map 1.4, Zoning]. Growth trends indicate increasing residential and commercial development in the area on private lands. Lyon County is actively pursuing land purchase and recreational access points along the River.

2. Zoning

Patterns and Trends - The zoning patterns around Dayton State Park show a variety of influences [Map 1.4, Zoning]. The existing pattern is expected to change significantly in the foreseeable future as the local and surrounding areas' growth rates climb. Zoning changes invariably are moving from industrial and agricultural to sub-urban and urban.

3. Access/Transportation

The main road through Dayton Valley is US Highway 50 [Map 2.1, Circulation]. US Highway 50, in 1990, was just two-lanes, and traffic volumes on this road exceeded capacity in many places during peak commuting hours. Today the Nevada Department of Transportation has widened the road to five lanes and traffic continues to exceed capacity.

US Highway 50 provides access to the developed facilities of Dayton State Park. Two dirt roads leaving the highway south of the main park entrance provide access to an interpretive area at the base of the historic site and to the ranger residence and park office. Old US Highway 50, its pavement crumbling and in disrepair, continues to provide motorized access to the historic site on the eastern-most side of the park. There are no other motorized roads within the boundaries of the upper park.

The primary circulation route within the lower Park is a paved roadway with an un-paved spur encircling the campground. A dirt service road circles behind the group use shelter and connects the maintenance area with the main park road.

Trails - Historic and recreational trails exist in and around Dayton State Park. The historic Pony Express Trail, which passes through the Park along the route of Old Highway 50, still accommodates equestrian and non-motorized use.

The Pony Express Association recreates the famous mail run on occasion and uses the trail for recreational trail riding. The portion of the trail connecting Genoa, Dayton Valley, and Fort Churchill State Historic Park is a popular route and receives frequent publicity. This is due primarily to its close proximity to populated communities.

Dayton State Park is used informally as a “central hub” for other regional trails and roads by both hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians and ATV/motorized users. The opportunity to develop and market this Park as a connector “hub” is already present and being continually requested by staff, public, and local/regional government entities.

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west would help to increase the use of the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

4. Utilities

The Dayton area is well served by the utilities available. [Map 2.2, Utilities].

a. Water

There are two existing sources of potable water in the Dayton area. The Dayton town water system, which receives its water from a well located near the center of town, serves the majority of water users in the area. This system extends into the lower park from the southern border and services all existing facilities. A spur of this system could be extended into the upper park along Pike Street. The other water source is the Rosepeak system which serves residents to the northeast of the Park. This system will have to be tapped into if development that needs water is planned for the upper park.

b. Electrical Power

Electrical power is provided to the Dayton area by Sierra Pacific Power Company. A major transmission line runs northwest of the park, with an extension along the park's northern border. Another power line enters the park from the south and provides power to the park office, comfort station and group use area. No major construction of new power lines is scheduled in the foreseeable future.

c. Telephone Service

Telephone service is provided by Nevada Bell. The service line for the park enters from the south and extends to the park office. A major underground fiber-optic cable is located along US Highway 50, but does not service the park.

d. Sanitation

The Dayton Sanitation Treatment Plant serves most properties in the Dayton area, though septic systems continue operation in some areas. Sanitary service is provided to the park by a spur of this system which enters the park to the south and extends to the existing comfort station and group use area.

An underground tank stores waste water from the park RV dump station. This waste has historically been hauled to Reno/Sparks and disposed of through their sewage system. Carson City will not accept waste from outside the county at this time. The system in Dayton is small and cannot currently handle waste from the RV dump, which can be up to 2000 gallons each time it is pumped. Trash service is provided by Waste Management and overflow is hauled to the Carson City Landfill by Rangers. Due to the expense of maintaining and operating the RV dump, it is typically closed.

e. Gas

Two gas pipelines serve the Dayton area. A major pipeline runs along the slopes of the Flowery Ridge to the west-northwest. In addition, a high pressure gas line runs along US Highway 50 and services Dayton. No park facilities utilize either line.

III. THE EXISTING PARK

A. NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Physiography

Dayton State Park sits in the basin and range province of Nevada's Great Basin. It lies partly on the lower flanks of Flowery Ridge and partly on the valley floor in the Carson River flood plain. The two major mountain ranges around the park are the Virginia Range just to the west, and the Pine Nut Range to the southeast. Both are sparsely vegetated, supporting pinion-juniper populations, although the Virginia Range has large populations of sage and low shrubs interspersed.

Slopes within the park vary widely. In the lower park east of the highway, the landscape slopes less than 15%, with most areas less than 8%. Along the river, dikes and sandbars create relief. In the upper park, the landscape changes dramatically. In this area, slopes reach, and sometimes exceed, 30% [Map 3.1, Slope].

2. Climate

a. Temperature

Dry air, light precipitation and large temperature ranges characterize Nevada's overall climate. The continental condition is present because

the Pacific mountain system blocks out or greatly modifies any maritime air moving inland from the ocean.

In Nevada, there are three temperature zones - the hot desert, the rain shadow and the high plateau. Dayton State Park lies within the western rain shadow zone. The temperatures here average 70 F during the summer and 32 F during the winter.

This zone represents the least amount of temperature range variance compared with any other zone of the State.

b. Precipitation

Dayton State Park lies in Nevada's northwest climate division. There are four such climatic divisions in the state: northeast, northwest, south-central and extreme south. In the northwest, the average annual precipitation is 8.5 inches, the second largest amount.

This precipitation pattern shows an inverse relationship with temperature; the lower the temperature, the heavier the precipitation. This is because both temperature and precipitation depend on elevation and latitude.

Precipitation increases with elevation; as the air rises, it cools and its moisture condenses. Precipitation also increased with latitude in Nevada, since the prevailing storm tracks cross the northern half of the State.

Dayton State Park is in the rain shadow of the Sierra's and therefore receives less precipitation than Carson City and Reno which are only 10 - 15 miles west.

Most of the precipitation comes in the form of snow. In terms of winter sports use, Dayton State Park is at an elevation that does not provide for long term winter sports use on a regular basis.

c. Solar and Wind

The solar angle measures the altitude of the sun off the earth's surface. For park development, this angle is used to design shade structures that provide relief from the hot summer sun. At Dayton State Park, the sun angle at noon on June 21 (summer solstice) is 75.

In Dayton, the actual number of days of sunshine is very high, ranging year round from around 63% to over 90% in the summer. Availability of shade is a very important issue regarding park use.

In Nevada the basin and range topography combined with the prevailing storm tracks have an affect on the speed and direction of surface winds.

At Dayton State Park the winds during the winter months average 5.5 mph from the south and southwest. During the spring and summer months the winds average around 7.8 mph from the west and southwest.

3. Geology

Some of the earliest geological surveys in the state of Nevada were conducted in the Dayton area. The discovery of gold and silver in the 1850's stimulated and continued this interest. The United States 40th Parallel Survey mapped this region in 1878.

The dominant geologic features within proximity of the park include the Virginia Range and Dayton Valley. The Virginia Range, of which the Flowery Ridge is a part, lies northwest of the park. It is the northernmost segment of a master fault block which also includes the Pinenut Mountains to the southeast and the Wellington Hills and Sweetwater Range far to the south. This fault block is inclined to the west, causing the Carson River to flow along the westward edge of Dayton Valley. Dayton Valley supports the floodplain for this segment of the Carson River.

Two basic geologic units exist in the park, each occupying roughly half of the park's area. The lower slopes of Flowery Ridge to the west of Highway 50 attain elevations to 4,575 feet within the park.

Flowery Ridge is made up primarily of andesite and related volcanic rocks, which are members or associates of the Kates Peak formation found widespread in the Virginia Range. Along the old highway cut, several minor faults and one major fault are visible. They show no evidence of recent movement. Also occurring in the area is an older sequence of altered andesite called the Alta Formation.

The second unit is the Carson River and its floodplain, east of Highway 50. Elevations of this unit range from 4,323 feet along the river to 4,335 feet. The Carson River floodplain area is composed of deposits of fluvial sediments, from boulders to sands and fine clays. Alluvial fan gravel and stream-laid gravel, sand, silt and clay of various ages and depths are found in the area.

This unit is a typical river deposit conglomeration of various materials. The region is subject to periodic flooding, with resulting deposition and erosion (1990 Master Plan, Dayton State Park).

4. Water Resources

a. Watershed/Streams

The Carson River is the predominate water feature in the area. With its headwaters in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, it flows northeasterly to its terminus in the Carson Desert near Fallon. Throughout Dayton's history, Carson River floods damaged roads, bridges, and structures.

Recent flooding, in 1983, 1986, and 1998 covered the lower park area with two feet of water. In addition to silting roads and parking areas, these floods carved into the west river bank by approximately one hundred feet, leaving the same distance on the east bank exposed. The New Years flood of 1998 moved the river 's course to the east, leaving a prominent oxbow along the west shoreline, separated by a newly formed island. This oxbow now provides important aquatic and riverine habitat for the Northwestern Pond turtle which is a state protected species.

b. Impoundments



The Cardella Ditch leaves the river at the southern park boundary and flows north, parallel to the river. This ditch is maintained by local ranchers and is often plugged by beaver dams.

This ditch is an important hydrologic feature in the area. It was constructed over the years to transport Carson River water to the mills and farms of the valley; today many of these ranches are still in operation.

c. Water Sources

The Town of Dayton water system provides water for domestic use in Dayton State Park. The water comes from a well located near the center of town. Water quality is good and is tested regularly.

In addition to the existing supply, the Rose peak water system, northeast of the park facilities, is another possible source of water that has not been piped to the Park at this time but could be considered in the future.

d. Water Rights

The Division holds no water rights for Dayton State Park.

5. Soils

a. Description

Nine soil types have been identified within Dayton State Park [Soil Conservation Service (SCS), 1984 (Figure 3.1).

The previous 1990 master plan has a detailed description of the soils. Most of the soil types have at least some limitations to facilities development. Below is a summary of the soils analysis.



Figure 3.1, SCS, Soils Map, 1984.

The Upper Park consists of largely one soil type, the Olac-Rock outcrop complex #462. These soils lie on strongly sloping uplands, and are generally very shallow and well drained. The soil, weathered from volcanic rocks, is stony, shallow and overlies hard bedrock. Both permeability and runoff of this unit are moderate, water capacity is low and the hazard of water erosion is slight.

East Fork clay loam is #274 and represents the Cottonwood and meadow areas in the upper park known as the Old Mill Pond. It is a highly compactable soil and could have impacts on suitability.

The remainder of the park supports four soil types, formed predominantly by sedimentary deposition of the Carson River. The Fallon fine sandy loams (#291-293) make up a large area. They are very deep, poorly drained soils found on narrow stream terraces. This soil formed in alluvium of the Carson River and is prone to frequent flooding. The remaining soil units, Dia clay loam (#253) and Sagouspe sandy loam (#611), are also subject to flooding.

b. Constraints

Major limitations for all areas include the high water table and lack of precipitation during the summer months. Similar limitations exist for all soils found in the moist areas of the lower park.

The high water table occurs during the spring and summer months, although the dates vary with soil type. During this time, depth to water table ranges from one to five feet, which limits effective rooting depth. In addition, most of the soils consist of a sand, silt and loam composition. This also limits vegetative growth due to poor permeability and drainage.

Two drainages in Dayton State Park have high erosion potential, they flow to the east from the Flowery Range. The drainage furthest north, the smaller of the two, appears to be somewhat stabilized. The second drainage is much larger and has more erosion potential. It flows from Flowery Ridge through the landfill, across the Old Highway 50 embankment to the campground and the river.

Where the drainage drops from the landfill to the mill, the gradient averages 20% while the slope is sparsely vegetated. Gully erosion in this area has already begun. In addition to soil movement, such erosion would further unearth refuse from the landfill site.

6. Park Ecology

a. Habitats

Most of Nevada, including the Dayton area, lies in the Upper Sonoran Life Zone. The wildlife of Dayton State Park is typical of the Great Basin desert of west-central Nevada (1990 Dayton State Park Master Plan) [Map 3.2, Habitat].



Riparian Woodland - This community occurs in low-lying, moist areas along the Carson River and along some stretches of the Cardella Ditch. The vegetation here is dependent on the course of the river and the water table level. This zone includes the dense vegetative corridor following both waterways. Cottonwood galleries, willows, rushes and sedges, and grasses typify the vegetation in this zone.

Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) is a majestic tree of bottom lands and stream bank environments. It has great spreading branches and a broad crown, which affords welcome shade and cooler temperatures in a larger landscape of semi-arid desert. Frémont cottonwood forms gallery forests or riparian

woodlands along the lower reaches of the Truckee, Carson, and Walker rivers in the western Great Basin where soils are seasonally flooded or permanently saturated.

Spring runoffs resulting in inundated primary floodplains are important for depositing the tufted seeds of the cottonwood in backwaters and river margins where they germinate and grow as the water table declines through the season. Some springs allow for abundant regeneration of cottonwood, while lower runoffs provide for none.

The less disturbed Frémont cottonwood riparian woodlands of these river systems naturally have a variety of willows in the understory along with an herbaceous layer of rhizomatous grasses, such as creeping wild rye. Rich in species diversity, most wildlife of the park frequent this zone at some point of their life cycle.



Species: Waterfowl include redheaded and cinnamon teals; shorebirds such as long-billed curlews and willets; bald and golden eagles and other raptors; migratory songbirds like the yellow-breasted chat.

Common mammals include muledeer, mountain lion, beaver, coyote and bear.

Floodplain/River Terrace - The most diverse of the plant communities occurs on the floodplain and river terraces of the Carson River. This community type occupies the area within the 100 year flood plain and is influenced by a seasonally high water table.



Here, a variety of soil types exist. The vegetation consists of mixed associations of trees and shrubs. Large trees, shrubs and grasses are common in this area. Nesting birds, the majority of the wildlife in this zone, find refuge in the trees and understory.

Upland Scrub - This community type lies west of Highway 50 and consists of a well-drained sparsely vegetated slope. This habitat zone takes up the largest area of the park. This zone encompasses the steep, rocky slopes of lower Flowery Ridge.

The Aquatic zone includes the Carson River and Cardella Ditch.



These waterways support a variety of game and non-game fish. Rare and threatened aquatic species such as the Northwestern Pond turtle, native fish including Lahontan cutthroat trout, Lahontan speckled dace and Lahontan tui chub utilize the river habitat (The Nature Conservancy, Personal Conversation, Laura Crane, Carson River Project Manager, 8/2006).

Current Planting regime - The following tree and shrub species have been introduced into the heavy use areas of the park during previous facilities development landscaping project:

Russian Olive	Purpleleaf Plum	Honey Locust
Black Locust	Bearberry	Green Ash

b. Regional Significance of Park Habitat

Threats: New development precluding connectivity and invasive/noxious weeds are the two greatest threats to these habitats. Dayton State Parks small acreage does not provide critical or important habitat in a regional context.

The highly altered landscape of the lower park does not provide any unique habitats. Due to the urban “encroachment” along the river across from the Park, and the development to the south, the Park itself is

becoming “boxed in”. This lack of connectivity precludes regional significance.

c. Noxious Weeds

Areas of significant disturbance exist within all these habitats. Beginning with the mining activities of the last century, extensive site disturbance occurred.

This includes the mill site and reservoir, Dayton town dump, and abandoned drainage ditches. Currently it is flooding that is bringing in the Noxious weeds. Those listed by the State of Nevada found in the Park include Hoary Cress (short white top) and Tall White Top. Other invasives include Russian thistle, multiple grass species, poverty weed, and Tamarisk.

d. State and Federally Listed Species

Sage-like Loefflingia or sagebrush pygmyleaf. Loefflingia squarrose spp. Artemisioides: This plant is known to occur within a radius of 1 to 1.5 miles of the project area; species was found growing in section 12, T16N, R21E. It was last observed in the area during June of 1980. The State of Nevada ranks this plant as S1 - critically imperiled and S2 imperiled due to rarity or other demonstrable factors.



Northwestern Pond Turtle. Emys marmorata marmorata: Habitat occurs within the project area in oxbows and marshy areas adjacent to the Carson River. It was last observed in the area in June of 2003 (Fuels Reduction Plan, 2004). The State of Nevada ranks this pond turtle as S3 -

Vulnerable to decline because it is rare and local throughout its range, or has a very restricted range (NV Division of Natural Heritage, 2006).

e. Impacts of Wildlife on Park Resources

There are obvious and continuing impacts from Beaver activity on Cottonwood overstory and Cardinella Ditch.



7. Perceptual

a. Scenic Attributes

Dayton State Park encompasses two distinct areas. Sights, sounds, and smells combine to form a sense of place in the upper park very different from that of the lower park.



In the upper park, west of the highway, the landscape is open with no trees or structures to inhibit one's views.

Two specific spots along Old Highway 50 provide panoramic views of Dayton Valley and the Pinenut Mountains to the southeast. From these areas the mill site and parts of the lower park are visible.

b. Location and Direction of Views

Views in the lower park are much shorter and directed by vegetative masses. In many places, the thick vegetation prohibits seeing more than a few feet in any direction.



This situation provides an excellent landscape for campsites, picnic sites and, with plant community and topographic changes, a trail system as well. The longest views are found along the river, and in the open spaces along the highway.



There are views across the river which detracts from the outdoor experience in the form of new subdivisions.

c. Sounds, Smells and Sources

Sounds from US Highway 50 are perceived as louder in the upper park. For example, highway traffic becomes intrusive in the historic area, though it seems quieter and farther away when in the campground picnic sites. Several factors influence the perception of noise in such cases.

In the lower park, more background sounds compete with roadway noise, but do not muffle it. These include birds and other wildlife, wind rustling leaves, and sounds from other park visitors. In the upper park, wildlife, vegetation, and visitors are limited, the stillness is constantly broken by passing cars and trucks.

The nature of the upper park, with its steep and rocky slopes, serves to reflect sounds. This is particularly true with loud and sudden noises such as car backfires or big trucks shifting gears. Highway noise will certainly worsen in all park areas as traffic gets heavier.

d. Spatial Patterns

The highway is not visible from most areas of the lower park, while being very visible from the upper park. The south end of the park abuts a trailer park which is fairly unsightly.

The new development across the river also detracts from the scenic quality and will undoubtedly provide more sounds and potentially smells that will detract from the outdoor experience.

The vacant land north of the park is very quiet and at this time provides no distraction. It is zoned for industrial use at this time and is posted for sale. Development of this property will surround the Park with negative sights, sounds and potential smells that will detract from the user's park experience.

B. CULTURAL RESOURCES

The following Cultural Resource sections were taken directly from the previous 1990 Master Plan, and references can be found in that document.

1. Prehistoric

The Dayton area forms one border between the ancient territories of the Washoe and Paiute Indians. Resources available to prehistoric people in the

area would have been drinking water, firewood, structural wood for dwellings, basketry materials, grass and brush seeds, fish, waterfowl, various small game, mule deer and antelope. Both groups claim to have had winter settlements in the Dayton area, though no evidence exists to suggest either tribe occupied such a settlement in the park.

In 1978, the Archaeological Survey, University of Nevada, Reno, conducted a survey. Its purpose was to locate and partially evaluate historic and prehistoric remains. The researchers found evidence of isolated sites where specialized tasks were performed. The artifacts discovered indicate that these tasks probably involved tool manufacture and repair and perhaps hunting and butchering.

These sites do not qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. They do, however, help document the pattern of prehistoric land use and thus have scientific significance.

2. Historic

Settlement by Euroamerican miners and settlers began about 1849. Resources available to these settlers were water for drinking, irrigation, mining and milling operations. Other resources include placer gold, firewood, and sites for mills, houses and roads. Fish and game may have been of importance to early settlers, but probably declined with the growth of farming and ranching.

The archaeological survey cited above located and noted many historic remains in the park area. They include historic trash piles and trash dumps, as well as historic structures.

The most impressive of these are the stone and concrete foundations belonging to three different stamp mills. The ruins identified in the survey include a storage tank, pond, and foundation for the stamps, foundations for other machinery and various buildings, cuts in the side of the ridge, rock retaining walls, and historic refuse.

A circular concrete wall located on a hill north of the mill site originated from the 1910 mill. Two small caves or dugouts in the base of the ridge, one or both of which were used by a local hermit until his death in 1977, also originated from the early mill. Two concrete pillars were located on the toe of the ridge several hundred feet west of the stamp mill.

Timbers helping to hold water in the reservoir were also noted in the survey. Photographs from 1910 show the reservoir located immediately south of the mill. Water from this reservoir was used in the milling process. An earthen dam, fronted by a wall of heavy timbers, trapped and held the water. Some of

these timbers still remain. Concrete foundations are all that remain of the head-gate which controlled the flow of water.

The survey located a series of canals east of Highway 50. One, an abandoned canal, may have supplied water from the Carson River to an early stamp mill. It parallels an existing canal constructed in 1877 by Mr. Cardella, an Italian rancher. Aerial photographs indicate another slight, but lengthy indentation (similar to a canal) which may have been the tail race of the Rock Point Mills of 1861 and 1883.

The dense network of dirt roads formed another category of historic features recorded during the 1978 survey. Some of these roads, such as those around the stamp mill and one going north from the storage tank are abandoned and relatively old. These were used by teamsters hauling ore wagons to the mill's ore bin, located on the hill and adjacent to the mill site.

Other roads, such as a grid-like complex on the river terrace, appear to be more recent, or at least used frequently enough to keep the brush off. The grid-like pattern of these roads may indicate the existence of an older street pattern which use has continued after the buildings have disappeared.

A section of old Highway 50 runs through the park. This route served the overland stages between California and eastern points. In addition, westward-bound emigrant wagons trains, the Pony Express, and later the overland telegraph used this same route.

No artifacts associated with the two narrow-gauge railroads which ran by and to the mill were discovered. The first was the Dayton, Sutro, and Carson Valley Railroad which traversed the park in a northeasterly direction, adjacent and parallel to the ridge.

This railroad was in existence between 1882 and 1886. Secondly, the Carson and Colorado Railroad completed a spur track from their main line to the mill in 1888 and removed the rails in 1893. Experts believe construction of the dam, reservoir, and Highway 50 removed all remains of both railroads.



The stamp mill with its ruins, refuse and associated features is highly significant from a historical point of view. This site qualifies for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, as well as the State Historic Comstock District. It contains information about the technology and economics of milling and mining.

In addition, the Rock Point Mill was one of the earliest of the large mills built to crush ore from the mines of the Comstock. Thus, it preserves an important segment of the history of Dayton and of Nevada.

The historic trash sites identified have scientific significance. Taken together, they document a pattern of historic land use (informal refuse disposal). Individually, each affords a look into the economics and consumption of the people who preferred or were forced to use this form of refuse disposal.

The large formal dump has even more potential for scientific investigation since it contains the refuse of an entire community deposited over a relatively long period of time. Among other things, proper study of this site could yield a great deal of information concerning the economic and social development of Dayton and the larger Comstock Region. It does not qualify for national or state historic recognition.

C. SITE ANALYSIS SUMMARY

The Composite Site Analysis determines the areas most developable. This analysis is based on the following criteria:

1. Development Limitations

Areas considered sensitive or hazardous to development were identified and excluded. Steep slopes (over 15%), floodplains, and sensitive soils were considered. Using these criteria, the entire lower park has development limitations [Map 1.3, Flood plain]. The upper park has a few areas of slope over 15% [Map 3.1, Slope]. Sensitive soils which would cause septic leach field problems exist in the upper park in the southern section south of the old mill pond site (See Soils, Chapter III, Section 5).

2. Development Opportunities

Because many park activities and facilities can withstand flooding, the composite site analysis identifies development constraints and those areas suitable for siting facilities [Map 3.3, Composite Site Analysis/Development Constraints].

D. CURRENT CONDITION OF THE PARK, 2007

1. Interpretative Plan

The current direction is to focus on self-guided walking tours in both the upper and lower parks. The upper park focuses on historical resources; the lower park focus is natural resources, flora, fauna and the river.

The current interpretive plan (2001) objective is to increase visitor numbers and to improve the visitor experience at the Park. Current interpretative season runs from May to September and is based on a good percentage of local residents from Lyon County and Carson City. The plan directs interpretation to inform and educate visitors of the park's natural environment and cultural history. This included the construction of interpretive displays, kiosks and trail markers to display a concept centered on land use and its relationship to the history of the site and surrounding area.

The Upper Park: The plan directs interpretation to focus on the transition that the park has gone through over the years; how man's changing values have affected the land during these periods of history; and the mill ruins are to be the focal point illustrating the social and economic occurrences that took place on the site. The theme should have a quality about it that not only allows

visitors to relate to it, but also makes them feel that they are a part of it: a problem or factor of our existence which has been with us for a good number of years or something related to the western concept of growth and progress.

The original plan included an observation deck located above the water tank because of its opportunity to expand on the interpretation information and offer an attractive destination to visitors.

There is a kiosk structure located at Rock Point Mill Site on the west end of the pedestrian underpass. It is for display of historic information for the site. There is also a fairly old sign in place just past the kiosk with a very brief history of the Rock Point Mill. The themes are mining, The Rock Point Mill Site history, the Carson and Colorado Railroad, Native Americans, Chinese influence, women and children, and influential people in history and the Pony Express.

The upper park contains the remains of the old Rock Point Mill, the most significant feature of the Park. There are remains of a concrete storage tank, reservoir (mill pond) and head-gate, stamp battery footings, building foundations and footings for other machinery. Foundations of smaller buildings, rock retaining walls, waterways and cuts in the side of the ridge exist which could be interpreted with displays and self-guided tours. The remains of old Highway 50, which is the same road what was used as the overland route to California and the Pony Express Trail also present interpretive opportunities.

The interpretive plan also notes that the “meadow” or the old mill pond site should be utilized for group events, and day use. Programs and Activities are varied and change as opportunities arise. There is no merchandise sales due to lack of a visitor center or full time park staff on site.

The Lower Park: The interpretive program consists of 3 kiosks and displays: A two panel kiosk is located just past the park entrance. A distinct theme is not directed by the plan but the left panel has been used to describe local flora and fauna in the lower park and the park’s rules and regulations. The right panel displays current park information such as a map of the park, facilities, places of interest and trail information.



According to the 1990 plan, this kiosk was to include other nearby parks and the facilities and opportunities they provide as well. It was also to include information on Downtown Dayton to encourage visitors to explore the Town of Dayton and learn more on the history.

Plans that were recommended for the lower park that have been completed include planting trees along the group use area, relocating the horseshoe pits, and a demonstration garden. The demonstration garden has received repeated damage during flood years.



Those actions recommended but not implemented from the 1990 plan were to build a wedding arch, install a fire pit in the sand area and install a sand box.

Pedestrian Underpass: The plan 1990 plan described a mural that would be painted at the entrances depicting the history of the area. These murals have not been completed.



Programs and Activities: There are various types of programs and activities occurring in the Park. Sales of merchandise at this park is not feasible due to the seasonal nature and the lack of an office or visitors center. It was recommended in the 1990 plan that the park partner with the Dayton Historical Museum in respect to marketing the history of the park and the region.

2. MANAGEMENT AREAS

a. Upper Park

The historic character of the Upper Park was intended by the 1990 plan to be strengthened by developing two distinct uses; multi-use trail access, and historic interpretation of the Rock Mill Site. Old Highway 50, its surface maintained as a gravel road, continues to provide licensed vehicle access to both areas.

Rock Point Mill: The 1990 plan stated that the Rock Point Mill site development was to present the visitor with a look into the past using graphic displays and walking tours. The kiosk, with text and pictures, was to tell the history of the area and the Rock Point Mill's part in it. A self-guided walking tour would direct the visitor through the site and explain the historic remains. An important feature of all visitor information was to stress park rules concerning vandalism and theft of historic artifacts. Other management strategies that were considered included limiting access to certain areas, to assure adequate protection for the area. Other facilities proposed were parking, a comfort station, and resting spots with shade structures. These facilities have not been built.

A pedestrian underpass was planned and has been built to allow visitors to walk safely under the highway from the lower park to the upper park mill site. Another interpretive display was planned and has been built just outside the upper park, mill site access, its primary focus being to welcome and orient the visitor to the site.

Service vehicle access to the mill site is maintained as a pull out on US Highway 50 and an access road to the site of the former mill pond was planned but has not occurred. No public vehicular access was proposed to be permitted on this road to the old mill pond.

This earlier plan also recommended that the Rock Point Mill Site be incorporated into the Comstock Historic District. These approximate 20 acres should have been added to the district, as it remains one of its most important ore mills.

Equestrian Station: The second development proposed was the equestrian station. Located along the Pony Express Trail, this site was to encourage continued use of this trail for equestrian riders and others.

The site was intended to offer day use facilities for small to medium sized organized endurance rides and more casual riding. Parking, hitching posts, water, and limited picnic facilities were to be included. The comfort station proposed for the mill site would also serve equestrians. None of these developments have occurred. This is due to the costs associated with stabilization of the historic landfill material which is on site.

To protect any historic remains in the landfill, it was recommended that no site grading of existing dirt occur, nor would any foundations be dug in that area. (Adding fill or gravel in the area was to be permitted.) Another site along the upper section of the road may have to be considered that lies outside of the old dump.

A staff residence was proposed to be located in the upper park area, on the north end of old Highway 50. It was felt that this location would provide good views of the park for security purposes, is easily accessible via old Highway 50, and would maintain a sense of privacy for the park supervisor and his/her family. This facility has also not been built due to lack of visitor numbers to support the investment.

b. Lower Park

This plan proposed expanding existing activities, and providing more diverse recreational experiences.

Campgrounds: A second campground loop to the south was proposed to increase the number of available camping spaces from 10 to 20-25. The new units were intended to accommodate both RV and tent campers.

The units were to include a parking/RV space, tent pad, table, barbecue grill or fire ring, and landscaping and/or shade structures. A dense, vegetative buffer planted along US Highway 50 was to increase the sense of privacy in all units.

A new comfort station with showers was also to be located between the two campground loops. The existing sewer line was to be extended to this new facility and would then continue north to serve the RV dump station. These improvements did not occur due to funding constraints.

The 1990 plan proposed a group camp area also. The design of this facility was to be rustic and target medium sized groups, providing space for up to 15 RVs. The facility was to be designed to accommodate tent groups as well. This site was to offer parking, a group gathering area with a picnic shelter, and a comfort station. The group shelter area was proposed to provide a sink, 110 volt electric outlets, picnic tables, grills and a bonfire area. This facility, sited south of the group picnic area, was to utilize the existing park loop road and service road for access. These improvements did not occur due to funding constraints.

Today, the campground, located in the lower park area, currently provides 10 camping spaces primarily for RV campers. Camper maximum length is 34 ft. There is a camping fee of \$14 per day. A grove of cottonwoods and willows surround the campground and provide it with needed shade and privacy. A gravel roadway provides access to all the sites. Each site offers a parking pad, picnic table, barbecue grill and fire ring.

No water or restrooms are available exclusively for campground users. A four unit comfort station sits south of the campground and serves the campground, covered pavilion group use and family picnic sites. An RV dump station which provided sanitary facilities, is located near the park entrance, but is now closed.

Trails/Picnicking/Day Use: The 1990 plan proposed to continue to maintain the covered group pavilion. It is available by reservation only for weddings, reunions, birthdays etc. The rental fee varies by the number of people. This group-use facility provides 15 tables, a large barbecue grill, sink, water, and 110 volt electrical service. Organized groups and family reunions characterize use of this facility. A turf area covering 1200 square feet surrounds the group use structure.

An informational kiosk was placed near the park's developed facilities, to provide visitors with park brochures, and directional and historical information. The kiosk is centrally located, near the restrooms and the pavilion group use area and is be handicap- accessible.



Dayton State Park provides both family and group picnic opportunities. Eleven family picnic sites, all with a picnic table and barbecue grill are scattered along the loop road south of the campground. Most sites have river views and access to the river trail.

Along the trail, more specific interpretive markers are in place to provide detail about these subjects. Vandalism and flooding have taken their toll on these signs although most are still in place.



An additional foot bridge was built crossing Cardella Ditch to provide an important access point to this area. This footbridge, sited just north of the day use group picnic shelter, and several picnic sites are accessible to wheelchairs. The day-use fee is \$4.00 per car.

Trails: There are three basic trails; Mary's Gardens and Interpretive Trail, Tunnel Trail and River Trail.

The river trail itself has been rebuilt along the ditch dike several times due to the almost annual flooding. Trails are maintained by Boy Scout troop volunteers. This trail allows for an easement along the bank for continued ditch maintenance.

An interpretative kiosk was proposed and built to serve as a trailhead and provides an overview of such natural features as: the geologic history of Dayton Valley, the changing river course, beaver and other wildlife activity in the area, and the diverse plant community present.

Benches along the trail, along with the picnic sites, provide resting spots. Spurs from the trail extend to the river and allow closer contact with the water.



The short trails and loop trails are not built to any national or state standards and are difficult to follow. These trails received significant damage in past flood events. Determination of which trails to keep and to what standard will be a part of the alternatives.

3. Maintenance/Utilities

A meager maintenance shop currently exists at Dayton State Park. Basic maintenance tools are stored in the park office. Most maintenance equipment comes from the District II maintenance shop in Carson City. The park office currently consists of a metal shed equipped only with a phone, electric outlets and a wood burning stove for heat.

The 1990 plan recommended a park office be located on the site of the residence trailer. This office would be equipped with restrooms, a telephone, and a small area for storage of office equipment, brochures, etc. Should the need to enlarge the office arise at some future date, this location provides ample space for expansion. The metal shed used as a park office was to be converted into a minor maintenance shop and storage area.

This plan also recommended that the split rail fence and the east boundary fence be maintained. This has occurred.

Various utilities serve the use areas of the Park [Map 2.2, Utilities]. The water system provides potable water to the campground, group use area, ranger residence and RV dump station. Electric lines run to the group area use and to the ranger residence. The sewer system provides service for the restroom and ranger residence. Sewage is pumped from the underground tank of the RV dump station and is disposed of in Carson City. No public telephone service is available at Dayton State Park, although the park office phone provides this service in emergencies.

Currently, there is a two-lane paved road that loops three-tenths of a mile through the park and provides access to the park's picnic facilities. A gravel loop road serves the campground, accessed off the main park road. Dirt roads serve the maintenance/park office and ranger residence area from both Highway 50 and the main park loop road. These dirt roads can become muddy and rutted after rainstorms and flooding.

4. Landscaping Scheme

The current overall planting concept proposes using native or compatible plant species in most cases. Non-natives are proposed when activities are located away from existing tree clusters and when promoting privacy within the park.

In the lower park area, a dense vegetative screen exists between the campground area and US Highway 50. This screen could be improved by including evergreen trees and dense growing shrubs for year round privacy. Emphasis is currently placed, when possible, on native species. Not only are they adapted to the area's high water table and flooding conditions, they can also meet the needs of the local wildlife. Fire retardant plants are to be used around activity areas.

IV. RANGE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A. PROCESS AND RANGE OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Planning Process

The planning process involved over one years work beginning in 2006 and coming to completion in 2007, by state parks' staff, partnering agencies, and the public.

a. Past Plans

The previous park master plan for Dayton State Park was completed in 1987 and revised in 1990.

b. Process

Data Inventory and Analysis - Staff collected site and area information for Dayton State Park, and the regional area in many categories: land use trends (ownership, land use, zoning, transportation, trails and utilities), natural resources (topography, geology, hydrology, vegetation, soils, slope, wildlife, climate, air quality and perceptual attributes), and cultural resources (existing facilities, archaeological and historical resources).

Data collection included review of past planning documents related to management of the park and are listed below. Past plans addressing resources, fire, forestry, interpretation and other issues were reviewed and information used in identifying issues.

- ◆ 1979, Resource Management Plan; University of Nevada, Reno
- ◆ 1987, Dayton State Park Master Plan; NDSP
- ◆ 1990, Dayton State Park Master Plan (Revision); NDSP
- ◆ 1995, Hazardous Tree Management; NDF, John Christopherson
- ◆ 2001, Interpretive Plan; NDSP
- ◆ 2003, Fuels Management; NDF, John Copeland
- ◆ 2003, SCORP, Nevada's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan - Assessment and Policy Plan
- ◆ 2005, Nevada State Recreational Trails Plan
- ◆ 2005, DRAFT Lyon County Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- ◆ 2005, DRAFT Summary of Lyon County Open Space Plan.

This information was then analyzed and development limitations and opportunities were identified. User survey data from the past 5 years was analyzed and graphics were developed to present findings to the public at the first public workshop held June 21st, 2006.

Public Participation - Among the methods used to be responsive to existing and future needs were: 1) Survey of users, 2) Public meetings, 3) Continued liaison with community groups by staff, 4) Monitoring of trends and actual park use.



At the first Public Workshop stations were set up to allow the public to make written comments concerning each issue or section of the Park.

Maps, pictures, site inventory information, current demographics and trends as well as user survey results were presented to the public.

The previous 1990 Plan Goals and Issues were presented as well as those which had been brought up through surveys, staff and Lyon County prior to the first Public meeting.

The public was asked to redefine those issues, goals and objectives. There were also asked to put forth opportunities and ideas that the staff could use in development of alternatives (See Chapter IV, Section A), (Detailed Public Participation records can be found in the NDSP 359.3 file, Dayton State Park).

Planners and field representatives from State Parks and Lyon County presented site analysis information at a public workshop on June 21, 2006. On July 19th, 2006 another workshop was held by the invitation of the Historic Society of Dayton Valley at their regular meeting. A presentation was made to the Dayton Resource Advisory Committee meeting in July of that same year. Participants in the development of the first phase of data inventory and analysis and assistance with the first public meeting include but are not limited to:

- Nevada Division of State Parks
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Nevada Division of Natural Heritage (Natural Heritage Program)
- Lyon County Manager
- Lyon Co. Parks & Recreation Supervisor
- Linda Wimberly, Lyon Co. GIS and Graphic Design

Based on resultant information from these workshops, a new “Park Concept” or “Vision” for the Park was drafted by the Division. A range of recommendations were developed resulting from public workshops and data analysis. A recommended plan was then generated and in July of 2007 was presented for public comment. A detailed description of the range of recommendations, including the recommended plan can be found in below.

c. Park Concept and Range of Recommendations

New Park Concept

Dayton State Park played an important role in Comstock History. Interpretation of the Rock Point Mill Site is linked to other historic sites in the region. Overall development themes reflect the Comstock Mining Era.

As plans are developed for Dayton Downtown Historic District in the Pike Street area, the Historic Rock Point Mill Site will be managed and developed to be in sync with that Historic corridor.

The park provides convenient year-round recreational day-use opportunities including group use areas for family and community sized events. The park also provides reserved group tent camping for special events.

River trails are designed to allow for hiking. Interpretation along the trails will focus on the natural resources of the river environment.

The park plays an important role in backcountry road connectivity between other state parks and historic areas such as Dayton, Virginia City, Silver City, Gold Hill, Ft. Churchill, Buckland Station, Washoe Lake State Park and others.

A range of recommendations were developed resulting from public workshops and data analysis. A recommended plan was then generated and in May of 2007 was presented for public comment.

The following includes a general description of the range of recommendations displayed within the three major components of the Park Concept Plan.

- **Historical (Rock Pt. Mill)**
- **Recreation Development**
- **Natural Resources and the River Corridor**

Historical Component - Range of Recommendations

The following historical management strategies would be implemented through the entire Range of Recommendations:

There would be an effort to have the Historical District expanded to include the Rock Point Mill Site as well as making application to have the site placed on the National Register of Historic Sites.

A comprehensive interpretive plan would be developed for the Park that would address both historic and natural resource themes.

The Rock Point Mill interpretation and management would be coordinated with Lyon County and the downtown Dayton Historical District renovation efforts. An increased effort to market the Park site, old downtown Dayton, the Pony Express Trail, and the Emigrant Trail would occur, linking the Park to both western migration and Comstock history.

Less Emphasis on Capital Investment

The Rock Point Mill site would be maintained, stabilized, and protected in its existing condition. There would be no significant reconstructions or renovations.

This level of development would continue the current self-guiding interpretive concept. Existing interpretive trails would be upgraded to provide safer, better defined, and more sustainable surfaces. Interpretive signage will be improved to enhance the visitor's experience.

There would be regularly scheduled guided tours of the mill site during the summer use season utilizing seasonal staff and/or volunteers.

The park would continue to be managed under the supervision of a shared Park Supervisor with Washoe Lake State Park. The Park will continue to utilize limited summer seasonal staff.

Moderate Emphasis on Capital Investment

The Rock Point Mill site would be maintained, stabilized, and protected in its existing condition. There would be no significant reconstructions or renovations.

There would be an increase in interpretive displays that could include interpretive shelters that could display small models or images of the original site as it appeared during the Comstock Era.

This level of development would continue the current self-guiding interpretive concept. Interpretive trails would be expanded and upgraded to provide additional interpretive opportunities, a safer experience, and better defined and more sustainable trail surfaces. Some hard surfacing would be developed that would allow for limited ADA access to the site where reasonably feasible.

Interpretive signage would be expanded and upgraded to enhance the visitors' experience. There would be a larger number of regularly scheduled guided tours of the mill site during the major use season.

A full time Dayton State Park Supervisor would be requested along with a full time Interpretive Ranger and increased seasonal staff.

Higher level of Emphasis on Development Investment

The Rock Point Mill site would be maintained, stabilized and protected. There would be efforts to complete partial reconstruction of selected elements within the mill site based on engineering feasibility and costs.

There would be a significant increase in interpretive displays and signage that could include interpretive kiosks or shelters that could display small models or images of the original site as it appeared during the Comstock Era.

Interpretive trails would be expanded and upgraded - most with hard surfaces - to provide for increased traffic, safety, and allow for more ADA access to the site. A parking area would be added to the upper park above the Rock Point Mill site to allow for additional access. A portion of old Highway 50 (Pike Street) would be paved to the parking area to allow vehicular access from the northeastern end of the Park to the mill site. Cooperation with NDOT and Lyon County will be necessary in securing easements and access off of current Hwy 50.

There would be walk-in only access from old Dayton along Pike street to the Mill site. The design of this access site would reflect the Comstock era and be coordinated with the selected themes of the Dayton Downtown Historic District.

A small amphitheater accommodating approximately 250 people would be constructed in the southwest portion of the upper park to support

local community events. Additional restrooms would be added to the upper park.

Recreation Development - Range of Recommendations

The following recreation management strategies would be implemented through all the Range of Recommendations:

The Park would provide for day use and reservation only group camping for special events such as scouts troops, church groups, etc. The RV dump station would be removed.

Recreation development would support local and regional community special events by maintaining the existing group picnic area including the covered Pavilion. The lower park would continue to provide restrooms and potable water sources.

There would be upgraded interpretive signage along the river trails managed under a self-guiding concept. The interpretative themes of the lower park would continue to be focused on the natural resources of the river corridor.

The main entrance to the park would be redesigned to reflect the Historical theme of the park.

The existing interpretive garden would be maintained and the trails along the river would be redesigned to be safer and more sustainable.

Less Emphasis on Recreation Improvements

Group reservation camping would be primitive tent camping only, with minimal campground development. Minimal development would still likely provide water, bonfire area and possibly a group grill and other group amenities.

The existing developed campground sites and loop road would be eliminated and re-vegetated to native habitat. Additional parking may be accommodated in this area if needed. The RV dump station would be eliminated.

The upper park would include no additional recreational developments outside those described above in the Historical Component.

Moderate Emphasis on Recreation Improvements

Group reserved camping would be primitive tent camping only, minimal campground development. The existing campground would be converted to picnic sites and additional parking.

Recreation development would support local and regional community special events by expanding the existing group picnic area including the covered Pavilion to allow for higher capacity/larger groups.

The play area at the current pavilion would be expanded and may include both an expanded and the addition of some playground equipment compatible with a fairly natural environment. Parking would also be expanded.

Additional trails would be developed in the lower park with some hard surfaced to provide ADA accessibility Trails for connectivity with other trails in the vicinity would be developed.

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west would help to increase the use of the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

A multi-use trailhead and equestrian staging area would be developed on the north section of the upper park along the Pony Express Route. A short portion on the upper end of old Highway 50 would be paved to allow vehicular access from the north end of the Park to the trailhead/parking. Cooperation with NDOT and Lyon County will be necessary in securing easements and access off of current Hwy 50.

Information about the regional trail connections would occur at the multi-use trailhead and in the lower park.

This moderate level of development would require a full time Dayton Park Supervisor, a full time Interpretive Ranger, and seasonal staff. Expanded office and maintenance facilities may be required.

Higher Emphasis on Recreation Improvements

The current campground would be converted to a reserved group camp area for car and tent camping only. It would not support large RV pull-through sites.

Recreation development supports local and regional community special events by adding an additional covered pavilion and group picnic area to

allow for more than one group and larger groups. Overflow parking would be developed at the south end of the park.

The informal play area at the current pavilion would be expanded and may include the introduction of some playground equipment compatible with a fairly natural environment. An additional restroom facility with potable water would be developed in the lower park. Parking would be expanded.

A small outdoor amphitheater accommodating up to approximately 75 people would be added to the lower park to support interpretive programs and small special events.

Additional trails would be developed in the lower park some hard surfaced to provide ADA accessibility. Trails for connectivity between other trails in the vicinity would be developed.

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west would help to increase the use of the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

A multi-use trailhead and equestrian staging area would be developed on the Northwest section of the upper park along the Pony Express Route. It would be connected with the Rock Pt. Mill parking area described in the previous Historical component. A longer portion on the north end of old highway 50 would be paved to allow vehicular access from the northern end of the Park to the trailhead/parking.

The southern portion of old highway 50 (Pike Street) would be walk-in only as described in the previous Historical component. Cooperation with NDOT and Lyon County will be necessary in securing easements and access off of Hwy 50.

Information about the regional trail connections would occur at the multi-use trailhead, the upper park parking area, and in the lower park.

This high level of development would require a full time Dayton Park Supervisor, a full time Interpretive Ranger, a full time facilities manager, and seasonal staff. Expanded office and maintenance facilities may be required.

Natural Resources/River Corridor - Range of Recommendations

The following natural resource management strategies would be implemented through all the Range of Recommendations:

Weed abatement, hazard tree removal, and protection of the Cottonwood galleries from beaver activity.

Fuels management of the Park would continue and include removal of heavy fuels that may threaten the parks improvements. Extensive fuels removal would not occur in areas not threatening improvements.

Less Emphasis on Management of the Natural Resources

Natural or passive regeneration of the riparian corridor would be allowed to continue without additional plantings or restoration projects.

Facilities associated with the campground would be removed and vegetation would be restored in disturbed areas.

Higher Emphasis on Management of the Natural Resources

Both the moderate and high emphasis concepts are combined in this section of recommendations.

Landscaping would occur on the developed areas in the park.

There would be active restoration efforts applied to the river corridor and the sagebrush communities'. Replanting of native trees and shrubs along the riparian corridor would occur. Cooperation with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Conservation Districts on reach-long restoration activities would occur.

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river would help to increase the size of the floodplain that could be managed as park land/open space.

Extra control efforts would occur on the cheat grass understory with reseeding of the native grass and forb species within the sagebrush communities.

B. RECOMMENDED PLAN

[Map 4.1; Recommended Plan]

1. Historic Resources

There will be an effort to have the Historical District expanded to include the Rock Point Mill Site as well as making application to have the site placed on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Sites.

A comprehensive interpretive plan will be developed for the Park that will address both historic and natural resource themes.

A historical site management plan for maintenance and stabilization of the Rock Point Mill site in sync with the interpretive plan will be developed.

An increased effort to market the Park site as regionally significant along with the Pony Express Trail and the Emigrant Trail will occur, linking the Park to both western migration and Comstock history.

There will be an increase in interpretive displays and signage that could include partial reconstruction of selected elements within the mill site based on engineering feasibility and costs. Interpretive kiosks or shelters would be constructed that display small models or images of the original site as it appeared during the Comstock Era.

Interpretive trails in the mill site will be expanded and upgraded and provide some ADA access to the site.

A parking area and restrooms will be added to the upper park above the Rock Point Mill site to allow for additional access. This parking area will be a combination parking/trail staging area.

There are two potential access points for the parking/staging area. The first is old Highway 50 from the northeastern end of the Park to the mill site which could be paved to allow licensed vehicular access. Cooperation with NDOT and Lyon County will be necessary in securing easements and access off of current Hwy 50; the second is an alternate access from the south at the end of Pike Street (Old Hwy 50) to the Mill site. The design of these accesses will reflect the Comstock era and be coordinated with the selected themes of the Dayton Downtown Historic District.

2. Recreation Development

The main entrance to the park will be redesigned to reflect the Historical theme of the park.

The Park will provide for day use and reservation only group camping. The RV dump station will be removed.

Recreation development should support local and regional community special events by maintaining the existing group picnic area including the covered Pavilion.

The informal play area at the current pavilion will be expanded and may include the introduction of some playground equipment compatible with a fairly natural environment.

The current campground will be converted to a reservation only combination group camp area and group picnic area.

An additional covered pavilion and restrooms will be added adjacent to the converted group camp/picnic area to allow for more than one group and larger groups.

There will be upgraded interpretive signage along the river trails managed under a self-guiding concept. Additional trails will be developed in the lower park, some hard surfaced to provide ADA accessibility.

The Park will work cooperatively with the development of the Lyon County trails plan to promote connectivity within the valley.

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river and above the park to the west will be aimed at increasing the trails and overall use of the park and ensure connectivity to other trails in the area.

The interpretative themes of the lower park will continue to be focused on the natural resources of the river corridor. The existing interpretive garden will be maintained and the trails along the river will be redesigned to be safer and more sustainable.

A small outdoor amphitheater accommodating approximately 75 people can be added to the lower park to support interpretive programs and small special events.

Parking areas in the lower park can be expanded and overflow parking will be provided for at the south end of the park.

In the upper park, an amphitheater accommodating up to 500 people could be constructed in the southwest portion to support local community events. Due to the cooperative nature of this development, construction is dependent upon cooperative agreements with county, private, or the Town of Dayton for off-

site parking areas. It is also dependent upon successful fundraising efforts. The amphitheater construction and design must address and protect the natural resources and cultural sites within that area. Ultimate size and location of the amphitheater would be determined during design and is dependent upon site limitations.

The combination parking/trailhead described in the Historic section will be designed as a combination parking/staging area for multi-use that will accommodate equestrian trailer parking. It would be developed on the Northwest section of the upper park along the Pony Express Route as described in the Historic section.

Information about the regional trail connections will occur at the multi-use trailhead, the upper park parking area, and in the lower park.

Redesign of the office and maintenance facilities would occur in order to provide staff the ability to properly manage park resources.

3. Natural Resources/River Corridor

Fuels management of the Park will continue and include removal of heavy fuels that may threaten the park improvements.

There will be active restoration efforts applied to the river corridor and the sagebrush communities' including replanting of native trees and shrubs along the riparian corridor. The Park will work cooperatively with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and

Acquisition of adjacent parcels along the river will be aimed at increasing the size of the floodplain that could be managed as park land/open space.

Control efforts will be taken to control the cheat grass understory and may include reseeding of the native grass and forb species within the sagebrush communities.

Weed abatement, hazard tree removal, and protection of the Cottonwood galleries from beaver activity will also occur.

C. IMPLEMENTATION - DEVELOPMENT PHASES

Phase I

- Nominate the Rock Point Mill Site to the National Register of Historic Places and State Register of Historic Sites.

- Develop a park-wide comprehensive interpretive plan addressing both historic and natural resource themes and initiate implementation as appropriate through phases 1 - 3.
- Develop a historical site management plan for maintenance, stabilization, restoration, and possibly some reconstruction of the Rock Point Mill site in sync with the interpretive plan and initiate implementation as appropriate through all phases.
- Design and construct new front entrance and signage.
- Remove/close RV dump station.
- Convert current campground to a gated, reserved combination group tent camp area and day use group picnic area.
- Layout /design and construct sustainable trails in the lower park along the river.
- Design and install interpretive panels along trail in lower park along river.
- Continue to implement noxious weed control.
- Continue to implement hazard tree plan (NDF) and fuels control plan.
- Continue protection measures from beaver impacts on cottonwood trees.
- Implement restoration seeding and planting plan for the park, plant irrigated vegetative screen on lower park south side along fence.
- Seek funding for appropriate staffing levels.

Phase II

- Continue implementation of the historical site plan.
- Design and Construct facilities in the lower park:
 - Sustainable trails system outside the river area, including connector trails to tunnel.
 - Expansion of the current play area and playground equipment Amphitheater
 - Replace/expand administration/facilities area
- Design and Construct facilities in the upper park:
 - Sustainable trails
 - Interpretive signs and structures
 - Parking, trailhead and road access
 - Restrooms
- Develop interpretive programs and schedules in sync with development.
- Seek Funding for appropriate staffing levels.

Phase III

- Continue implementation of the historical site plan.
- Construct facilities in the lower park:

- New group use Ramada and restrooms adjacent to second group area, redesign group area as needed to compliment new Ramada and restrooms.
- Overflow parking area

Opportunity Driven Development

- Cooperate with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Conservation Districts on river restoration activities as opportunities arise.
- Begin researching land acquisition opportunities and implement as appropriate through all phases.
- Construct Amphitheater in the lower park as cooperative agreements are in place providing for off site parking by the County, Town of Dayton or other; and as funding is raised for this cooperative project.

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